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TWO SONS OF OIL

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THE

Two Sons of Oil;

OR,

THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

FOR

MAGISTRACY AND MINISTRY

UPON

A SCRIPTURAL BASIS.

BY REV. SAMUEL B. WYLIE, A. M.

"And I will give *power* unto my witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

"These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."—Rev. xi. 3, 4.

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WITH

An Essay on Submission to Civil Government.

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PREFACE.

THE principles of reformation are not fashionable. They were once, however, considered as the glory of Presbyterians. The time has been, when the whole body of Presbyterians, in Scotland, England, and Ireland, unanimously subscribed them. For civil and ecclesiastical reformation; for a glorious covenanted cause, thousands have bled and died.

In the following discourse I have endeavoured to advocate *that cause*. Not because it is an ancient cause; not because many have sealed it with their blood; but, because I thought it the doctrine of the Bible, and the cause of Christ.

I make no apology—I court no one's favour. A conviction of truth was the cause of publication. There may, no doubt, be unguarded expressions. Any thing that is so, if demonstrated, will be candidly acknowledged.

SAMUEL B. WYLIE.

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THE TWO SONS OF OIL, &c.

ZECHARIAH IV. 14.

"Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

THIS chapter is replete with abundant comfort to the returning captives. In their embarrassing circumstances, they stood in great need of consolation. They were disposed to consider their situation as helpless and deplorable; and doubted much, whether the temple they were about to erect, would ever acquire the respectability of the former one, or their city abound with its usual population. They could scarcely believe, that, "The glory of this latter house would be greater than of the former." Hag. ii. 9.

The scope of this vision, therefore, is, to show that God would, by his own omnipotent arm, consummate the work, notwithstanding the imbecility of its friends, and the malignant opposition of its enemies. To this purpose he informs them, by his prophet, that the head stone would be put on with shoutings of joy; and that this was not to be attributed so much to visible instrumentality, as to the superintending influences of his own omnipotent Spirit. Verses 1, 10.

From the eleventh verse to the end of the chapter, we have a brief explication of this vision, intended as an illustration of the assurances already

given. This is done by the angel, at the request of the prophet, verse 11:—"What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?" The angel having sufficiently humbled him, by leaving him to repeat his request, lower his terms, (confining it to the two olive branches,) and confess his ignorance, answers in the words of the text, "These are the two anointed ones," &c.

The answer itself requires explanation. Who are intended by these two Anointed Ones, or Sons of Oil, as it reads in the original? Who these are, will perhaps be best ascertained by attending to the functions which they discharge, compared with collateral texts. By comparing together the second, third, and twelfth verses of this chapter, it would appear, that they pour golden oil into the bowl on the head of the golden candlestick. That this golden candlestick represented the Church of Christ, is abundantly evident from several passages in Scripture, see Exod. xxv. 31, and 1st Kings vii. 49, and Rev. i. 20. The seven golden candlesticks are expressly declared, by the Spirit of God, to represent the seven churches.

The Church of Christ may be considered under a twofold point of view, namely, invisible and visible. In relation to the first, the two olive branches may be emblematical of Christ and his Spirit, the Redeemer and Comforter. Jesus is not only the Messiah, the Anointed One himself, but he is also the good Olive Tree to his church. John i. 16: "Out of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." The Spirit is the Unction or Anointing, which replenishes the mind with divine illumination. 1st John ii. 20: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye

know all things." From Christ, the Olive Tree, by his Spirit, the Olive Branch, is communicated to believers all the golden oil of grace, whereby their lamps are kept burning and luminous.

In relation to the second, viz., the visible church, they may be symbolical of the two great ordinances of Magistracy and Ministry, vested at that time in these two illustrious characters, Zerubbabel and Joshua, the former in the state, and the latter in the church. They are characterized as "Sons of Oil." Kings and priests were anointed, and thus solemnly set apart to their respective functions. They "stood by the Lord of the whole earth," importing that they were faithful adherents to his cause and testimony, continually emptying themselves into the golden bowl, contributing their respective influences to the advancement of civil and religious reformation, as the objects of his peculiar care. In allusion to this passage in Zechariah, the two Witnesses mentioned, Rev. xi. 4, are designated by the same emblems, viz., "The two Olive Trees standing before the God of the earth." The analogy of Scripture, as also the current of the best commentators, agree, that by these two Witnesses is meant, that succession of men, who, in all ages, and against all opposition, have valiantly contended for the purity of these divine ordinances, both in constitution and administration. In this sense, consider these two Anointed Ones.

In the prosecution of the subject, we shall—
I. Premise a few things, which, if duly attended to, may be useful in the farther illustration of this text. And, 1st. God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the Supreme Governor of the universe. Rev. xix. 6: "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." This will be generally admitted.

2. All physical and moral power is, naturally, necessarily, and independently in God. Gen. xvii. 1: "I am God Almighty." This is admitted even by the haughty Babylonish monarch. Dan. iv. 35: "He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?"

3. All power to be found among the creatures is necessarily derived from him. He is the original source and fountain from which it flows. Acts xvii. 28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being."

4. All this delegated, or derived power, should be exercised to his glory, and regulated by his law. 1st Cor. x. 31: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." To effect this end, all our powers should be directed, and of this, his law is the unerring rule. By this, therefore, all rational beings are indispensably bound. God has given them no right to do what it prohibits. To suppose men to possess any such right, is wicked and blasphemous. This would be the same as to suppose God to say to them, I, as the Supreme Legislator, give you my law. To the least breach of it, I annex the penalty of eternal damnation; yet I give you a right to violate this, my law, and to wage war with your God, and direct your artillery against the Sovereign of the Universe!!! The Scriptures inform us otherwise. Deut. xii. 32: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add to it, nor diminish from it."

5. This delegated power appears most conspicuous in the person of the Mediator. Into his

hands universal dominion is committed. Matt. xxviii. 18: "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." Here the donation is universal. Its extent is unlimited, as to created nature. 1 Cor. xv. 27. The apostle expressly declares that nothing is excepted from his dominion, but the Godhead itself. Remarkable to this purpose is John v. 22: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." As Mediator, therefore, he pronounces sentence upon the reprobate, "Depart from me, ye cursed," &c., for this is a part of his judiciary functions. That this power, and the exercise of it, belong to him, as Mediator, is abundantly evident, not only from the circumstance of donation, which can in no sense apply to him as God, (for in this character nothing could be given him, being necessarily Lord of all,) but also from the explicit and positive assertion, in the twenty-seventh verse, that all this authority was committed to him, "Because he is the Son of Man."

6. This universal dominion, committed to him, as it respects the human family, in its administration, consists in two great branches, namely, Magistracy and Ministry. Through these channels it flows down to human kind, contributing its influences to ameliorate the character of those who are destined to everlasting life, to whom "all things shall work together for good." Rom. viii. 28. While it issues in the obduracy of those who continue implacable enemies, on whom every divine dispensation shall have a contrary operation.

7. Though both these branches are put under the Mediator's control, yet they are so, under different regulations. Ecclesiastical power is delegated to him in such a manner, that all ordinances

and institutions, necessary to the formal organization of a visible church, flow immediately from him as Mediator. Matt. xvi. 18. He is the builder of the church, the author of all her sacred institutions. All ecclesiastical functionaries, likewise, receive their authority from him, in the same character, for every part of their administration. Hence, Matt. xvi. 19, he commits unto them the keys of the kingdom, and the exclusive power of binding and loosing. But civil power is under a different regulation. It flows immediately from God Creator, as the Governor of the universe. Jer. x. 7: "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?" It existed previously to the fall, and would necessarily have existed, even had we never revolted against God; though, no doubt, in that case, it would not have been clothed in some of its present modifications. Man's subjection to the moral government of his Maker would have then been similar to that of beings of a more dignified order.

Civil government does not, as some modern politicians affirm, originate either in the people, as its fountain, or in the vices consequent upon the fall. Among the angels, who retained their primitive rectitude, we find certain orders, suggested by the denominations of Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers. Col. i. 16. This testifies regular subordination among them, agreeable to the constitutional laws of their nature, and their amenability to God, their Creator and Lord. But though civil government is no new order of things, predicated upon the fall, nor, like the ministry, in all its circumstances, flowing immediately from Christ as Mediator; yet it is among the all things, committed to him by the donation of the Father. Eph. i. 22. Its officers, likewise,

are enjoined, under pain of perdition, to make all their administrations bend to the honour of Immanuel: and the body politic, indispensably bound to modify their constitutions by his word, when in his goodness he has revealed it to them. Ps. ii. 10, 12: "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Can any thing be more explicit in demonstrating the obligation of the civil authorities to render homage and respect to Messiah? But as it is suggested that these two branches are under different regulations, we shall endeavour,

In the II. head, to show a little more particularly wherein they differ.

1. They differ in their immediate origin, as already hinted. Magistracy flows immediately from God Creator, and is predicated upon his universal dominion over all nations. Ps. xlvii. 7: "God is King of all the earth." To the same purpose we are informed, Jer. x. 7: "Who would not fear thee, thou King of nations? For to thee doth it appertain." And as it flows from God Creator, the common Parent and Head of all, the law of nature, common to all men, must be the immediate rule of all its administrations. A relation common to all should be regulated by a rule common to all. All stand in the same relation to God, considered as Creator and Moral Governor. The standard for regulating this relation, must, of course, be common. This standard is the law of nature, which all men necessarily possess. Revelation is introduced as a rule, by the requisitions of the law of nature, which binds

men to receive with gratitude whatever God is pleased to reveal; and to adhere to it, as the perfect rule, under pain of condemnation, and being treated as rebels against his moral authority. But Ecclesiastical power flows immediately from Christ, as Mediator, and is founded on his economical Headship over the church. Eph. i. 22, 23: God "gave him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body." As this power flows thus from Christ, as Mediator, the law of revelation, announced by him as the Angel of the Covenant, must, consequently, be the immediate standard for the regulation of every part of the system: and the law of nature comes in to be a rule, only in subserviency to the general rules of Scripture. Phil. iv. 8: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

2. They differ in their immediate objects. Magistracy respects things external, relating immediately to the outward man, 2d Chron. xxvi. 16, 20. Where Uzziah usurped the sacerdotal functions, and presumed to burn incense, contrary to the express command of God, the priests valiantly withstood him, and said, "It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord; but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary," &c. Yea, the Lord punished his presumption, and smote him with leprosy, and they thrust him out of the temple. Whatever provisions of external accommodations he is authorized to make, calling synodical assemblies, and issuing compul-

sory process for attending spiritual courts, respect men, as members of the commonwealth, and subjects of the realm. His ratification of church decrees, is nothing more than civilly adopting them, as good and wholesome laws, calculated to promote the welfare of the state.

But all ecclesiastical power is exercised about things spiritual. 2d Cor. x. 4: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty," &c. It considers men as members of the mystical body of Jesus; and if it takes any concern with the external man, such as the eyes and ears, it is only that it may thereby reach their consciences. To those that are without the pale of the visible church, its jurisdiction does not extend. 1st Cor. v. 12, 13: "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?"

3. They differ in their form. The magistratical power is lordly and imperial. It belongs to its functionaries to exercise dominion, as the vicegerents of God; use compulsory measures with the disobedient, and enforce obedience to the laws of which they are the executors. Rom. xiii. 1: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." And in case of disobedience to his legitimate authority, the magistrate ought not "to bear the sword in vain." He must not, indeed, exercise dominion capriciously, but act as the "minister of God for good" to his subjects.

But ecclesiastical power is altogether ministerial. Its functionaries are considered as stewards of the manifold mysteries of the spiritual kingdom, and are positively discharged from acting as "Lords over God's heritage," 1st Pet. v. 3. Like their great master, they ought not to come to be minis-

tered unto, but to minister to the spiritual exigencies of perishing sinners. They are, however, entitled to attention and obedience to their spiritual ministrations. Heb. xiii. 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you in the Lord," &c. But still they can exercise no compulsion upon the persons of men. This belongs exclusively to the civil magistrate. And whereas civil rulers may and ought to punish transgressions, as crimes dishonouring to God, as King of nations, and prejudicial to the state; church rulers are to consider them as scandals, wounding to the honour of Jesus Christ, dishonouring to God, in him, and ruinous to the souls of men.

4. They differ in their proper end. The immediate and proper end of all civil power, is, that the good of the commonwealth may be provided for, their temporal security and civil liberty secured upon the footing of the moral law, Rom. xiii. 4. The magistrate is accordingly called a "minister of God for good" to men. The ultimate end to be attained is the advancement of the glory of God, as King of nations, and a concern to promote the prosperity of the church; and the propagation of truth should be exercised as the means best calculated to obtain that end. Or the good of the church may be considered as an accessary end. The more faithful the administration of justice, the fewer will be the violations of the divine law; and consequently the fewer scandals to annoy the peace and happiness of the church.

But the proper and immediate end of all ecclesiastical power is, that the conviction, conversion, and edification of the souls of men may be promoted, Eph. iv. 11, 12. Here we find that the

immediate end of appointing all church officers was, "For the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ." The ultimate end is the glory of God, as he is "in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," 2d Cor. v. 19. The welfare of the state is only an accessary end, at which the church officers, as subjects of the state, ought to aim. The better they discharge their ecclesiastical functions, the fewer will be the crimes in the state, and the more faithfully will every civil relative duty be performed, and thus the welfare of the nation greatly promoted.

5. They differ in their effects. The effects of all civil powers are either proper or redundant. The proper effect of civil power is, the temporal safety and welfare of the commonwealth, together with the undisturbed enjoyment of all civil privileges.

The redundant effect is the good of the church, as far as this may result from the righteous administration of the divine law in rewarding the righteous, and punishing offenders, Rom. xiii. 3. And in removing all impediments that would obstruct the propagation of the religion of Jesus; like as Josiah and other reforming kings of Israel did.

But the proper effect of all ecclesiastical power is wholly spiritual, agreeable to the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. John xviii. 36: "My kingdom is not of this world." It is spiritual, and its exercise produces spiritual effects, operating on the souls and consciences of men.

The welfare of the state, as such, is only a redundant or accessary effect. It may, however, be very considerable. The amelioration of character, produced by the benign influences of the re-

ligion of Jesus, upon the human heart, may be highly advantageous to national prosperity: as true godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

6. They differ in their subjects. Civil power may be vested in one or more. This is left to the discretion of the body politic, and is hence called "an ordinance of man." 1st Pet. ii. 13. Whatever the particular form be, whether monarchical or republican, it is legitimate, and entitled to obedience, provided the constitution be agreeable to the moral law.

It may also be delegated from one to another. 1st Pet. ii. 14. We are commanded to yield conscientious obedience, not only to the supreme magistrate, but also to his delegates. "Unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well."

But ecclesiastical power of jurisdiction cannot vest in one. 2d Cor. ii. 6. When speaking of the restoration of the incestuous person, who had been excommunicated, the apostle informs us, that his censure "was inflicted by many."

Though the power of ORDER, or the administration of the word and sacraments, belongs to every regular gospel minister, yet the power of jurisdiction belongs exclusively to a consistory of presbyters. Neither can one ecclesiastical officer delegate authority to another, to perform ministerial functions. It can only come from Christ, the head, by the medium of proper officers. See Matt. xvi. 19, compared with Titus i. 5.

7. They differ in their correlatives, or the persons on whom they are exercised respectively.

The civil power extends to all persons, resi-

dent within the realm, be their estate, character or condition what it may. Rom. xiii. 1: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Here there is no exception of any class or condition of men. But,

Ecclesiastical jurisdiction extends only to those who are professed members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, and operates upon them exclusively under that character, 1st Cor. v. 12, 13, where we are informed, that all church power of jurisdiction is confined solely to those that are within. Hence those who are not church members, if guilty of any thing scandalous, requiring public censure, must become members of the church, before they can become proper objects of ecclesiastical censure. Church jurisdiction extends not beyond the walls of the house of God.

8. They differ in their distinct and divided exercise. Thus, should the one neglect the performance of duty, that is no reason why the other should be remiss, but rather the contrary. Should the state take no notice of the murderer, or the adulterer, their neglect by no means unnerves the arm of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, neither should it relax the rigour of church censure. The same will hold equally in a change of cases. Again, when either has done what is just and right, by a process issuing in the acquittal or condemnation of the person arraigned, the other is bound to take cognizance of the offence, and proceed accordingly. Thus, when a church member has satisfied the civil law for a crime committed against the state, the ecclesiastical authority ought to prosecute him for it, as a scandal, and deprive him of privileges, until he give due evidences of contrition, and satisfy the laws in that case made and pro-

vided. Thus both the civil and ecclesiastical authority may, and in many cases ought, to punish for the same offence; yet the process ought to be entirely distinct, and the powers independent of each other.

But as we have endeavoured to show wherein they differ, it will be necessary also in the

III. Place, to show wherein they agree.

1. They agree in this, that God the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the original fountain from which they flow. To suppose any power or authority whatever not originating from God, essentially considered, would necessarily lead to atheistical principles. It must, therefore, emanate from him. Rom. xiii. 1: "There is no power but of God." To the same purpose is 2d Cor. v. 18: "All things are of God." Civil power was already shown to originate from God, as Creator, and to be founded on his universal dominion, as the King of nations, Jer. x. 7. And though all ecclesiastical power flows immediately from Christ, as Mediator, yet it is radically and fontally in a three-one God. All the right and authority of Christ, as Mediator, is originally derived from God, as well as civil power.

They are, to be sure, under different regulations: these have been already stated. By virtue of this derived right, Jesus is constituted the sole Legislator in Zion, and is the immediate, as the Father is the ultimate, source of all ecclesiastical authority. Hence the authority of church officers is analogous to that of Christ himself, namely, by delegation. John xvii. 18. Christ himself states his own and his ambassador's commission, as being parallel in this particular point, "as thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

2. They agree in this, that both are subjected to the Mediator, though under different considerations. Matt. xxviii. 18. John v. 22 and 27. Eph. i. 21, 23, with many other portions of Scripture, leave no room for the candid mind to doubt of the universality of the donation.

But the different regulations under which these two branches are subjected unto him, are very important, and highly worthy of the most serious attention.

In civil matters, he does not commission rulers and officers. These receive their commissions from God, from whom their authority emanates, and upon whose sovereignty over the nations it was founded, previously to, and independent of, the development of the new covenant economy. But, in virtue of the Father's donation, he has a right to require the execution of the orders given to civil rulers. Ps. ii. 10, 12. "Now, therefore, be wise, ye kings, &c. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." To obedience they are indispensably bound. If they refuse, they are in danger of being dashed in pieces by his iron rod. Thus Jesus, as the Governor in the kingdom of Providence, (the wheels of which he manages, Ezek. i. 26,) conducts the golden oil of the benign influences, as well of the civil as of the ecclesiastical branch, into the golden bowl of his mediatory fulness; thence to be dispensed to the lamps of civil and religious reformation, till the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. Hence, Eph. i. 22, 23, he is the head over all things, for the use of the church, his body.

3. They agree in their mutual independence. They are co-ordinate. They may beautifully

subsist together, independently of each other; but they are not collateral, mutually dependent, and which cannot rightly subsist, if separated.

The civil branch has no power over the ecclesiastical, as such; nor has the ecclesiastical any power over the civil. Yet the same persons, in respect of different relations, may be superior, or inferior, to another person; and may require another, or be themselves required, to fulfil relative duties; and in case of delinquency, may arraign others, or be themselves arraigned, pursuant to the laws of their respective courts. Thus ministers, as ambassadors of Christ, have a right to require magistrates, as church members, faithfully to execute their magistratical power, so as may best promote the honour of Christ, and the welfare of his church; and in case of gross acts of maladministration, may inflict upon them the censures of the house of God. And, on the other hand, magistrates have a right to require ministers, as their subjects, faithfully to execute ministerial power, as an excellent mean of rendering the nation pious and virtuous, in order that its happiness may thereby be promoted.

This principle, if duly attended to, and judiciously applied, will free the Westminster Confession of Faith from the false imputations of Erastianism, charged upon it by modern reformers.

There are several articles in the twentieth, twenty-third, and thirty-first chapters, which have been much inveighed against, as giving the civil magistrate too much power in the church of Christ. Let it be considered that he can convoke synods, not formally, as ecclesiastical judicatories, but only as the members of the commonwealth,

in which character they are his subjects. Rom. iii. 1. "Let every soul be subject," &c. When convened, surely they are bound to do what is most calculated to promote the glory of God. If their synodical deliberations be calculated to do so, should they not essay them? Should they become remiss, ought not he to require them, as his subjects, to do their duty? Should they adulterate the pure fountain of evangelical doctrine with the worm-wood and gall, or errors and heresies, ought not he to prohibit them from poisoning the souls of his subjects, debauching their moral feelings, and thereby bringing down the vengeance of God upon the commonwealth. If he views these things with indifference, how can he be the minister of God for good to men?

4. They agree in being both bound to take the moral law, as the unerring standard of all their administrations.

That the civil branch is thus bound, is evident not only from the voice of nature, which announces the moral law, as the supreme rule, regulating our relation to God, as our Lord and Sovereign, and requires the body politic to graft upon it their civil constitutions, under pain of Heaven's high displeasure; but also from the express command of God in his own word. To this purpose, see Deut. xvii. 18, when, speaking of the supreme magistrate, it is observed, "and it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of his law in a book, out of that which is before the priests and the Levites. And he shall read therein all the days of his life." That the obligation still remains under the New Testament, is evident, not only from the morality of the duty, but also from the circumstance, that the detailing of such

a constitution as is here mentioned, would be productive of both the character and administration indispensably required, Rom. xiii. 1, 6. The denial of this seems unreasonable, even were Scripture silent on the subject. Is not the divine law a complete rule of faith and manners? Is it not so to every individual as such? If every one is individually bound thereby, will their union, in a national society, dissolve the obligation? Is there any incompatibility between civil government and Christianity, so that men must be divested of the latter, before they embark in the former? If not, should not they, in every part of their administration, consider themselves as Christians, and remember their amenability to the divine law? By this, every action shall be tried. Rom. ii. 12, "As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law."

That the ecclesiastic branch is bound by this divine rule, is obvious to all. Mal. ii. 7. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth." And in their commission, the ambassadors of Jesus are strictly enjoined to teach mankind to observe all things commanded by their divine Master, Matt. xxviii. 20.

5. They agree, in as much as both have supreme and subordinate judicatories, in which they exercise jurisdiction, Mat. xviii. 15, 18, where we have a divine warrant for kirk sessions. These are subordinate to, and two or more of them constitute, a Presbyterial judicature, which is divinely recognised, 1 Tim. iv. 14, and also Acts viii. 1, and xiii. 1. These are subordinate to, and two or more of them constitute, a synodical assembly, which also is recognised, Acts xv. xvi. chapters. Here we have a reference, convocation, dis-

cussion, and the Synodical decrees consequent thereupon. This may be regularly extended to Ecumenical or General Assemblies over the whole habitable globe, as the word imports, and as the necessity of unity in counsel and co-operation, among the members of the mystical body, evidently requires.

The supreme and subordinate judicatories in the state, are variously modified, at the discretion of the body politic, which, if not repugnant to the moral law, ought to be considered legitimate.

6. They agree, in as much as both, on account of their divine authority, entitle their faithful executors to double honour. 1st Tim. v. 17. "Let the elders that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour." Here honour and respect are enjoined toward the ecclesiastical branch, whose character should be venerated, and their persons cherished even for their work's sake.

Reverence and honour are also due to the civil branch. To this purpose we are commanded, Prov. xxiv. 21, to "fear God and the king." Lawful rulers are God's vicegerents, and ought to be honoured, on account of him whom they represent. And Rom. xiii. 7, when, speaking of the civil magistrate, the apostle commands to "render to all their due, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour."

7. They agree in this, that the ultimate end of both, in every part of their procedure, should be the glory of God. In Isai. lxi. 1, 4, we are informed that the grand end of every part of Christ's economical administration, in proclaiming liberty to the captives, in opening the prison doors to them that were bound, and announcing the acceptable year of the Lord, was, "that God might be glorified."

In like manner, to this end, ought all the movements of the civil branch to be directed. It is a divine ordinance. Its executors are the vicegerents of Jehovah. Every act of their administration, should, of course, be a farther development of his character, and a new manifestation of his glory. 1st Cor. x. 31. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." But as it appears that the two branches agree, in several things, it may be proper, still farther, in the

IV. head, to show what concern the civil branch should take with the ecclesiastic, or inquire how far the civil power, *circa sacra*, reaches.

That magistrates have officially, by divine authority, something to do with religion, to enforce the commands of God, and suppress the violations of his law, appears plain even from New Testament documents. Rom. xiii. 4. "He (the magistrate) is the minister of God." Now how can he be God's minister, and yet be regardless of the honour and laws of him, from whom he has derived his authority? Moreover, God's commands are obligatory upon every one, in his respective station and relation in society.

When God says, "Buy the truth, and sell it not," "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." When he forbids "turning aside to the right hand or to the left." In one word, when speaking of idolaters, Deut. vii. 5, he commands, "to destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire." Upon whom are these injunctions obligatory? Is it only upon private individuals? Is the magistrate exempted? Does the circumstance of his being

God's minister, loose him from the obligation of the divine law?

This, indeed, would be doctrine worthy of modern illumination. But it stands in direct contradiction to the whole volume of the book of God. See one passage, Deut. xvii. 18, 19. But we shall proceed more particularly to inquire, what concern the magistrate has officially with religion?

1. He hath no directive power about any thing ecclesiastical. He hath not any right to prescribe rules, introduce new modifications, or alter a single pin of the sacred tabernacle. The church's constitutional laws are derived from a higher authority. To this she is amenable. Isai. viii. 20. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The church judicative, as such, possessing the sacred depositum of the heavenly oracles, ought, as in Matt. xxiii. 10, "to call no man master. For one is her master, even Christ."

2. He hath no power in, but only about ecclesiastical concerns. Every act of his, concerning religion, should be essentially and formally civil. He may not dare to touch either the key of order, or the key of jurisdiction. Should he, like Uzziah, presume to interfere with the sacred ministerial functions, let him dread the tremendous consequences. He ought, like Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, to contribute every effort, as far as his political influence can extend, to promote religious reformation. Thus we find, 1st Tim. ii. 2, that this is the desirable end to be effected by his righteous administration, viz.: "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty."

3. The civil magistrate ought to defend and protect the church of Christ. Isai. xlix. 23. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers," &c. Does not this imply protection? The metaphors selected by the Spirit of God involve the highest possible care and tenderness. I know it has been objected by some, that the tender care and concern here intended, is not official, but merely personal, as an individual member of the church. The reason assigned is, that the epithet involving concern is not confined to kings, but is common to all their queens: and this must be acknowledged to be unofficial. Sure none are exempted from being concerned about the interests of religion. The irrelevancy of the objection will appear, by attending to an observation formerly made, viz. that the commands of God are obligatory upon every one, in his respective station and department of life. Queens are bound to exercise all the influence, which in the providence of God is conferred upon them, in promoting the religion of Jesus. Kings or civil magistrates, in like manner are indispensably bound to exercise all the power which they possess in their stations, to promote the same desirable end. Whatever quantity of this power is kept back, is so much unliquidated debt due to the Messiah, by the express command of that God whom magistrates represent. Ps. ii. 12. "Kiss ye the Son, lest he be angry." When Christ's mystical body needs this power, and the magistrate withholds the benefit of it, does he not run the risk of being charged by Jesus, at the last day, as we read, Mat. xxv. 42, 45? "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty,

and ye gave me no drink, &c. Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

This same idea of protection, tenderness and care, as a blessing, to be expected in New Testament times, is held out, Is. lx. 10, and 16. "Kings shall minister unto thee," and "thou shalt suck the breast of kings." All these passages evidently intimate that the civil power shall be exercised in administering officially to the church every comfort which may be expected to result from the union of magistratical authority and paternal care; such as defending her from her enemies, and securing to her all her privileges.

Moreover, when in 1st Tim. ii. 2, we are commanded to pray for magistrates, and the end proposed is, that the church and people of God, under the wing of their protection, "may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty." Either indifference, therefore, on the part of the state, toward the church, or an equal protection to her enemies, is notoriously incompatible with the ideas obviously contained in these sacred passages.

4. He ought, by his civil power, to remove all external impediments to the true religion and worship of God, whether they be persons or things; such as persecution, profaneness, heresy, idolatry, and their abettors, as did Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah, and other pious kings.

Thus we are informed in the ninth chapter of second Kings, that Jehu was anointed to cut off the idolatrous house of Ahab. In the tenth chapter we are told, verse 25th, that he destroyed the worshippers of Baal; and in the 30th verse, God commends him for doing so. And expressly on

that account, promises his children the throne of Israel, to the fourth generation.

Farther, to the same purpose, we have the approved conduct of Asa, 1st Kings xv. 12, 25. "And he took away the Sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his father had made. And also Maachah his mother, even her, he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron." And in this, we are told, "He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father," verse 11.

Yea, he is even complained of, in the 14th verse, because the high places were not removed also. This, however, he afterwards performed, as appears from 2d Chron. xiv. 2, 5, where we have some more fragments of his history, "He took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves," and in this, "Asa did that which was good, and right in the eyes of the Lord his God."

An approved example is equal to a precept; but precepts are not wanting see Deut. ~~xiii.~~ VIII. 5, 18, 20, Zech. xiii. 3, and Rev. xvii. 16. Were it needful, we might quote also the authority of the most reformed churches in Europe, as also the most eminent martyrs. "We are encompassed about with a great cloud of witnesses."

The sentiments of that venerable assembly which penned the Larger Catechism, are full and explicit on this subject. "The duties required in the second commandment, are, the detesting, disapproving, opposing all false worship, and according to each one's place and calling, removing it and all monuments of idolatry." See Larger Cat.

quest. 108. In this point, we might reasonably suppose all the Presbyterians in North America to be agreed, as the above question from the Larger Catechism has been adopted, verbatim, into the creed and church constitutions of every denomination of them, without exception. See said Catechism, as ratified and adopted in their constitutions.

5. He ought to use every lawful endeavour to promote purity, unity, and reformation, in the church. Doing so, he will suffer none to administer ordinances, but those duly warranted by ecclesiastical authority. Independently of this, they are only impostors, who, like the locusts, devour every green thing, susceptive of their poisonous influence, and subvert the purity and unity of the Gospel church.

He will also call on ecclesiastics, as his subjects, to be active and diligent in the performance of duty. 2 Chron. xxix. 5. Hezekiah commanded the ministers of the altar to attend to their respective functions. "Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place." In this he acted not the part of a legislator, but only enforced the laws of his God, agreeably to the constitution of the kingdom, and required his subjects faithfully to perform their duty.

In the thirtieth chapter, he exhorts, entreats, and commands the people, to come to the house of God, and keep the passover. And when the magistrate commands what is expressly required by the law of God, his subjects are bound to obey. Rom. xiii. 1. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers."

It may perhaps be inquired, what are those things which he may lawfully command? To this I answer, he may lawfully command whatever is contained in the constitution, prescribed by him whom he represents. Deut. xvii. 18, we are told what this is, namely, the Divine Law. Whatever penalties are specified in that law, and nowhere either repealed or mitigated, should be duly inflicted, in case of disobedience. Where the law is silent or indefinite, with respect to particular crimes, against any precept of the decalogue, and the punishment due thereto, great prudence and discretion will be necessary to ascertain, whether said crimes are punishable by civil pains, as there are many violations of the moral law to which no particular civil penalty can attach.

Nothing should be held censurable by the church, or punishable by the state, but what is plainly contrary to the law of God; and become duly public, independently of requiring self-accusation.

But even when the crime is ascertained to be, in its nature and circumstances, punishable, great discretion is necessary in fixing both the quantity and quality of the penalty. Perhaps, in certain particular states of society, forbearance, without punishment, even of many real crimes against both church and state, would be most prudent and eligible. But here, wisdom is peculiarly necessary to direct. But when it would be improper thus to remit the punishment of these crimes, we observed that the quality and quantity should be particularly attended to. In many of them, the quality should be negative, consisting in deprivation of privileges, which might otherwise be enjoyed. For the breach of the tenth commandment,

the divine law has provided no other civil punishment. This is clearly implied in Exod. xviii. 21, where we are told, the magistrate must be a man "fearing God and hating covetousness." If such only are eligible, the covetous man is, of course, disqualified. The same might, perhaps, hold with those, who are habitual in the neglect of religious duties, as also with other descriptions too tedious to enumerate.

With respect to the quantity of a penalty, in crimes of a particular nature, not specially provided for in the divine law, there may be much discretionary power exercised, according to particular emergencies; taking care, however, that the divine law may never be violated. In such cases, the light of nature will be greatly subservient to the general rules of Scripture. Ezra vii. 26. Artaxerxes orders, "Whosoever will not do the law of thy God, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment." And in the next verse, Ezra blesses the Lord his God, for putting it into the king's heart.

But to return to Hezekiah. We find him, by civil authority, endeavouring to effect purity, unity and reformation in the church, and his exertions accompanied with the smiles of Jehovah's approbation; for, in the twelfth verse of the thirteenth chapter of second Chronicles, we read, that in "Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king, and of the princes, by the word of the Lord." In order to effect these desirable ends, he has a right to convoke synods, and councils, consisting of ecclesiastical persons, to consult and advise how the church is to be purged from corruptions, and the truths of

God most successfully propagated. For this, we have the approved example of pious magistrates under the Old Testament, as Asa, Josiah, Hezekiah, &c.

Moreover, these four EcumenicalCouncils were called by Christian magistrates. Constantine called the first Nicene Council: Theodosius the elder, the first Council at Constantinople: Theodosius the younger, the first Ephesian Council: Marcian the Chalcedon Council.

6. They ought to support the laws of God, by their secular authority, as keepers of both tables of the law, enjoining and commanding all to observe the same under such civil pains as may be calculated to effect their performance. Thus, 2d Chron.34th chapter, good Josiah, after he had removed all the idolatrous images, altars and groves, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem, commanded the priests to inquire of the Lord for him, and for all that were left in Judah and Jerusalem, concerning all the words of the book which had been found by Hilkiah the priest in the house of the Lord, and enjoined all that were present in Jerusalem, and Benjamin, to attend to, and observe its contents.

Thus, the civil authority is concerned, in sanctioning and ratifying the laws of the Most High God, acting as a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well.

The fourth commandment, whose obligation is perpetual, is directed to every relation. Every private individual must observe the law of God; but heads of families, and other superiors, must not only observe it themselves, but make those under their authority do so likewise, as far as their influence can extend, and also punish obstinate

violators thereof. "I know," says God, "that Abraham will command his children and household after him." So the magistrate must provide, that the Sabbath be sanctified in all his gates; that is, as far as his civil authority extends. Yea, we find even heathen kings ratifying the laws of the Most High God, Ezra vii. 23. The decree of Artaxerxes, is, "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven, let it be done for the house of the God of Heaven."

As it is his duty to ratify the law of God, in like manner he ought to sanction, by his civil authority, the decrees of ecclesiastical courts, when agreeable to the law of God, and calculated to promote his glory. Those he civilly adopts, as good and wholesome laws, tending to promote the happiness of the realm, and the glory of God, the King of nations. Hence it is, that good neighbourhood is promoted between church and state, and harmony and mutual co-operation between the testimony of Israel, and the thrones of the house of David, Ps. cxxii. 4.

7. He ought, also, to exercise a compulsory and punitive power about things religious. This extends to all persons within his jurisdiction. Rom. xiii. 1. Every soul is strictly enjoined to be subject to his authority.

Should it be inquired, what is the standard regulating this subjection? we reply, the law of God. This is the unerring rule, whereby the exercise of his authority, and their subjection thereunto, will be tried. Isai. viii. 20. "To the law and the testimony," &c. This law he is obliged to execute, under pain of Jehovah's displeasure, Deut. xvii. 18. Those who refuse to obey, and so obstruct the wheels of government, and dis-

honour the God of nations, he is authorized to punish.

That offences against the second table of the moral law are punishable, is admitted by all. This, therefore, requires no proof.

That breaches of the first table should also be punished, is equally warranted by reason, and the word of God. Let us examine the penalties annexed to the obstinate violation of the first four precepts of the decalogue. With respect to the first of these, see Deut. xiii. 1, 5. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams—that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death, because he hath spoken lies, to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt." Shall the magistrate punish the man who rebels against his own authority, and pass with impunity, or extend protection to the man, who, "untrembling, mouths the heavens," and points his artillery at the throne of the Omnipotent?

With respect to the second commandment, the penalty annexed to the breach of it is also expressly stated in Deut. xiii. 6. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Come, let us go, serve other gods—thou shalt not consent unto him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him." Compare Exod. xxxii. 27. Shall a robber of a little earthly property be severely punished? And shall he who robs God of his glory, and gives it to graven images, stocks, and stones, who, as in Hab. i. 16, sacrifices unto his net, and burns incense to his drag, be allowed to pass with

impunity? Hear what Job the Chaldean, (who lived not under the Jewish economy) says, chap. xxxi. 26, 28. "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge."

With respect to the third precept of the decalogue, we are informed, Lev. xxiv. 15, 16. "Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin, and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death; and all the congregation shall stone him," &c. Shall a man be punished for a treasonable expression against an earthly magistrate, and be protected in blaspheming Christ, denying his divinity, and vilifying and reproaching his blessed Spirit!! "If he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Heb. x. 28, 29.

With respect to the fourth, we may consult Nehemiah xiii. 15, 19. When the people about Jerusalem engaged about secular employments, bearing burdens, and trafficking out and in the city, he expostulates with them, shuts the gate of the city, and sets his servants to see that no burdens be brought in on the Sabbath. And in the 21st verse, he testifies against the merchants who lodged about the gates and wall, saying, "Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you." Here, we have an approved example,

for punishing the obstinate violators of the holy Sabbath. Thus, the breakers of all the precepts of the first table are punishable by civil pains.

I cannot here omit quoting the following paragraph from Gillespie's Miscellaneous Questions. "Is not (says he) the mischief of a blind guide greater than if he acted treason, &c., and the loss of one soul by seduction, greater mischief than if he blew up Parliament, cut the throat of kings or emperors, so precious is that invaluable jewel of a soul. And (says he) when the church of Christ sinketh in a state, let not that state think to swim. Religion and righteousness flourish and fade, stand or fall together. They who are false to God will never prove faithful to men."

8. He hath a right to judge of the decrees of ecclesiastical assemblies, whether they are agreeable to the law of God, the supreme law of the land. 1st Thess. v. 21. The command to "prove all things," is obligatory on the magistrate, as well as others. He also is bound to use the rule of unerring rectitude. Isa. viii. 20. "To the law and the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Before he gives his sanction to any church deed, he must bring it to this sacred touch-stone; if it agrees therewith, he ought to ratify it, if not, he has not only a right to reject it, but he is also bound to stamp his negative upon it.

This ratification of it is solely civil, and similar to his sanctioning of civil ordinances.

If this power is denied him, he must be considered as a being of no discretion, and, consequently, unfit to be a civil magistrate. To suppose him bound to ratify whatever the church might decree, without previous examination and convic-

tion of its propriety, would make him a mere tool, fit for nothing but propping up the crazy chair of the man of sin. But as we have endeavoured to show what the civil power ought to do for the church, it will be necessary, in the

V. place, to show what is the character of the civil branch, from which this is to be expected. And,

1. It should possess wisdom and understanding Ex. xviii. 21. "Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men." And Deut. i. 13. "Take ye wise men and understanding—and make them rulers over you." They must be men of ability, possessing wisdom and prudence, and well acquainted with the laws of the Most High God. Thus it is, that "wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability" of their administration, Isa. xxxiii. 6. And without this, there can be no reasonable expectation that they will answer the ends of their appointment.

2. Another part of their character, is, a profession of Christianity. For a Christian people to appoint a Deist to govern them, to say nothing of its repugnancy to the divine law, is even shameful. It is just like the trees in Jotham's parable, Judges, ix. 14. "Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us." Because they could not find a tree of more generous growth, to govern them. But this is contrary to the express command of God. Deut. xvii. 15. "Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother." Is it to be expected that the man, who is not a brother in the profession of the religion of

Jesus, but an obstinate Infidel, will make his administration bend to the interests of Immanuel, whose existence he denies, whose religion he mocks, and whose kingdom he believes to be fictitious?

3. Another character is, uprightness and integrity. Exod. xviii. 21, we are here informed that they should be "such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness." The high responsibility connected with their station, requires men of rectitude, and integrity of character; thus, 2d Sam. xxiii. 2, 3. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

4. They must be a terror to evil doers. Rom. xiii. 3, 5. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil—the ministers of God, avengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Hence, we are informed "he beareth not the sword in vain," suppressing, as far as his influence can extend, every violation of the divine law.

5. They must be a "praise to them that do well." 1st Pet. ii. 14. Rewarding and encouraging the virtuous, "that they may live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty." Solomon's administration is represented as being of this description, Ps. lxxii. 7. "In his days shall the righteous flourish and possess abundance of peace."

6. They should be continually attentive to official duty. Rom. xiii. 6. "For they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." If this were duly attended to, not only would magistratical functions be better executed,

but the absurdity of Erastianism would at once appear.

The church functionary is also commanded to attend continually to his department. 1st Tim. iv. 15. "Give thyself wholly to them." Of course, some are provided (exclusively of the civil magistrate) whose business it is to manage ecclesiastical concerns. But if this also was formally the magistrate's official duty, why should others belonging to another department be appointed? Farther, how could the magistrate attend continually upon this very thing, viz. his own official duty, which is purely civil, and at the same time attend to another concern, which is not civil? Common sense teaches, that if he attend continually upon the one, the other will of course be neglected.

7. The civil magistrate should be a keeper of both tables of the law of God. Deut. xvii. 18, 19. "And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes to do them." How can he be God's minister, if he be regardless of his law? And where can he find such a constitution, as that provided for him by the Spirit of infinite wisdom? By this he is indispensably bound, in his official capacity, as well as his subjects are, in their private individual capacity. But as we have been endeavouring to characterize the civil branch, from which protection to the church may be expected, it will be proper in the

VI. place, to characterize the ecclesiastical

branch, which is of right entitled to this protection. And,

1. Her constitution should be agreeable to, and founded on, the word of God. Heb. viii. 5. "See (says God) thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." This suits every possible purpose of edification. 2d Tim. iii. 16, 17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

2. Her officers should be regularly introduced to ministerial functions, by the presbyterial imposition of hands. 1st Tim. iv. 14: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee by prophecy, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." The awful catastrophe of Korah, Dathan, &c., should be viewed as a beacon to all, who, by their ambitious dispositions, would be in danger of splitting on this tremendous rock.

Christ denominates those who come not in by the door, "thieves and robbers;" and in Matt. vii. 15, commands us to "beware of false prophets, who come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." Let none expect to profit by their ministrations. "I have not sent them, (saith the Lord,) yet they ran: therefore, they shall not profit this people."

3. She should "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Jude 3, and 1st Tim. vi. 20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy care." In doing this, as with faces of flint and brows of brass, they should be explicit, bold, and valiant, whether the generation unto which they are sent will hear or forbear. There is no

neutrality in Christ's service. Judges v. 23: "Curse ye Meroz, (saith the angel of the Lord,) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

The very light of nature suggests the propriety of being plain and explicit with our brethren of mankind. Should we see our neighbour in danger of falling into a pit, where destruction would be inevitable, would we not violate the natural laws of humanity, if we did not warn him of his danger? Nay, would we not, to a certain degree, be considered, by the divine law, as accessary to his ruin? Of infinitely more importance is the salvation of the soul. Says our Lord, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

To faithful testimony-bearing, the following things are necessary: 1st. A just, summary, and clear statement of the truths contained in the sacred oracles. 2d. A clear refutation of the opposite errors, and especially those that unhinge the present truth, or word of Christ's patience. 3d. A life and conversation becoming the gospel; without which, the other two are only a burlesque upon the religion of Jesus.

4. Her discipline should be impartial. 1st Tim. v. 20: "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear." This is to be done with singleness of heart, and a deep sense of our responsibility to the church's Head. Hence, verse 21: "I charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one another, doing nothing by partiality." The rich should have no preference above the poor. 1st Tim. vi. 17: "Charge them that are rich in this

world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy."

5. Her worship should be pure, and free from all human inventions. 1st Tim. iv. 16: "Take heed to thyself and to thy doctrine." It is a matter of vast importance, not only from the consideration that it incurs the vengeance of Almighty God upon the innovators, but also because it poisons the souls of men. It should be therefore such, and such only, as God has commanded. "In vain, (says Christ,) do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. xv. 9. Those who add to, or diminish from the volume of God's book, may abide the awful consequences. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Query: Is it not a matter of importance to know whether the singing an "Imitation of David's Psalms," in any sense incurs the above penalty?

6. Her ministry should be learned and pious. Without the former, they will only betray, through ignorance, their cause into the hands of the enemy; without the latter, they will pollute the sacred sanctuary.

Consider, for a moment, what a ridiculous figure the ambassador sent to negotiate with a foreign nation would make, who could not read his master's commission. Would such a one be qualified to be an ambassador to an earthly potentate? Is not the negotiation of the King of kings much more important, than the adjustment of the differences between states and empires?

When Christ called his ministers in an extraordinary manner, he gave them extraordinary qualifications: and among these we find the gift

of tongues. In 1st Tim. i. 7, those are severely reprehended, who presume to enter on an office, without due qualifications, "desiring to be teachers of the law, yet understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." Such are the clouds of illiterate, methodistic locusts, which darken the horizon of these states. Without abilities, natural or acquired, they pour forth like torrents over the face of the earth, and lead aside the simple and unwary. The infuriated zeal with which they propagate their poisonous doctrines, resembles much the character of the Scribes and Pharisees, mentioned, Matt. xxiii. 15: "Who compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, he is rendered two-fold more the child of hell than themselves."

Without a due measure of learning, how can they meet the cavillings of deists, and crafty impostors, and so act the part of an Evangelist, required, Tit. i. 9, namely, to be able to convince the gainsayers, and put adversaries to silence?

7. They should be exemplary in life and conversation. Even before they are clothed with official character, it is required that they "have a good report of them that are without." 1st Tim. iii. 7. And to this purpose is the benediction of Moses to the sacerdotal tribe. Deut. xxxiii. 8: "And of Levi, he said, Let thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy Holy One." Let illumination of mind, and rectitude and integrity of character, be the portion of him who is devoted to sacred functions. The influence which their example will have on the generation is of great moment.

The proverb, "Like priests, like people," generally holds good. Hence it is said of this same

Levi, when "the law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips, he turned many from iniquity." Mal. ii. 6. But when, as in the eighth verse, "the priests departed out of the way," what is the consequence? "They caused many to stumble at the law." Thus we are commanded, Matt. v. 16, "To let our light so shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven." This is eminently obligatory on the ministers of the altar, who ought to be exemplary to society, in every part of their conduct. But as we have now endeavoured to characterize both the civil and ecclesiastical branches, we shall endeavour, in the

VII. place, to show what is our duty toward the civil branch, when thus legally constituted. And,

1. We ought to yield subjection with reverence and fear. Rom. xiii. 1, 4. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." For this, we have the command of God, in the passage now quoted; and that too, under the severest penalties. In like manner, Tit. iii. 1, the apostle commands, "to put them in mind, to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates," &c. To the same purpose, 1st Pet. ii. 13, 17. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake," &c.

2. We ought to pay tribute conscientiously, as unto the legitimate administrators of the ordinance of God. Rom. xiii. 6, 7. "For this cause pay you tribute also: for, i. e. because, they are God's ministers," &c. Here, the legitimacy and right administration of the ordinance, is the formal reason assigned, why tribute should be rendered;

consequently, where the cause exists not, the obligation otherwise established, ceases.

3. We ought to pray for their welfare, and give thanks unto God for them. 1st Tim. ii. 1, 2. The apostle exhorts us to make supplications, prayers, and thanksgivings, for kings, and such as are in authority. Here, certainly, he means such as make the law of God their rule, and bend their administrations to the honour of Immanuel. If this is not the case, the end proposed cannot be attained, namely, "That we may live quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty."

4. It is our duty to honour and esteem them, and not revile or curse them. 1st Pet. ii. 17. "Honour the king." To the same purpose, Rom. xiii. 7. "Render honour unto whom honour is due." All insults offered to magistrates, in the due exercise of their office, God will consider as offered to himself, in the persons of his representatives. This he forbids, under pain of his heavy displeasure. Exod. xxii. 28. "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

5. To obey "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." Rom. xiii. 5. Here are two reasons or motives assigned to enforce obedience. 1. For wrath's sake. The expression, that is not only for wrath, intimates, that wrath is one reason, though it is not all. Obedience for wrath's sake, is a yielding subjection, on account of the penalty that will be inflicted in case of disobedience. This ought to stimulate to the performance of the superior's commands, and is the thing intended by every penalty, and is the great reason why laws have penal sanctions annexed to them, and is considered as a motive to obedience in all laws, divine

as well as human. This motive of fear and punishment, is allowed to influence to obedience, in all things in themselves lawful, as well under illegitimate, as under legitimate governments. The 2d reason is, for conscience sake. This implies two things—First, that the thing commanded, should be done, because it is right. Second, because it is commanded by legitimate authority. As to the first thing, viz. that we should do what is commanded, because it is right in itself, the obligation arises from the moral law requiring it, and may be done, be the power commanding it never so illegitimate. It, of course, implies no homologation of the existing authority. The second thing, viz. the thing itself, because it is commanded, is competent exclusively to legitimate governments, and is the only *tessera* of loyalty.

6. We ought to live quiet and peaceable lives, bear true and faithful allegiance, and oppose all riotous and seditious practices. To the opposite of this conduct, God has annexed the severest penalties. Rom. xiii. 2. "He that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and shall receive to himself damnation."

Such persons God will consider rebels against his own royal authority, displayed in the rightful administration of his lawful representatives. He stamps such with more than ordinary marks of disapprobation. In Jude 1, he calls them "filthy dreamers, defiling the flesh, despising dominions, and speaking evil of dignities." The heinousness of their sin, and the vengeance of God upon it, is awfully marked in the destruction of Korah and his company, Numb. xvi. to which the apostle Jude here alludes.

7. We ought to support their just administrations

with our blood and treasure. If a magistrate may lawfully go to war, in defence of the just rights and privileges of the commonwealth, whatever justifies him so to do, lays his subjects under an obligation to support him, in every just and necessary measure, with their estates and selves. To repel force by force, is an early dictate of the law of self-preservation. To this we are also bound by the social compact, in which mutual protection is solemnly stipulated. The danger of losing the invaluable privileges of religion and liberty, may lawfully summon us to arms. In these cases, the civil magistrate is the public organ of the nation's will, and is entitled to obedience. Thus our renowned ancestors, by a solemn covenant, bound themselves to defend, with their estates and lives, the king's majesty, in protecting their religion and liberty: See Solemn League and Covenant. Such are the duties we hold ourselves bound to render to the civil branch, when legally constituted. Have we any right, then, to be stigmatized as anti-government men?

If anti should at all be used, it should immediately precede the word immoral, and then it is completely applicable. We always have been, and intend uniformly to continue, anti-immoral-government men.

Having thus shown some of the duties which we owe to a government, when morally constituted, it may be proper in the

VIII. place, to state the reasons why we cannot yield obedience, for conscience sake, to the present civil authority in North America. And,

1. The federal constitution, or instrument of national union, does not even recognise the existence of God, the King of nations. In these civil

deeds, though the immediate end may be the happiness of the commonwealth, yet the ultimate end, as well in this as in every other thing we do, should be the glory of God. Ought not men, in the formation of their deeds, to consider their responsibility to the moral Governor, and this obligation to acknowledge his authority? Prov. iii. 5. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." That a national deed, employed about the fundamental stipulations of magistracy, as an ordinance of God, and the investiture of magistrates, as his ministers, should no where recognise the existence of the Governor of the universe, is, to say nothing worse of it, truly lamentable. May it not be said of this nation as of Israel, Hos. viii. 4. "They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not?" Did not the framers of this instrument act, not only as if there had been no divine revelation for the supreme standard of their conduct; but also as if there had been no God? Did they not in this resemble the fool mentioned, Ps. xiv. 1, who "said in his heart there is no God?" Every official act of the governor of a province must have some specific stamp of his dependence upon the authority which appointed him; and shall a nation act as if independent of the God of the universe, and expect to be guiltless?

2. Another objection we have is, that most, if not all, of the state constitutions, contain positive immorality. Witness their recognition of such rights of conscience as sanction every blasphemy, which a depraved heart may believe to be true. Moreover the state constitutions necessarily bind to the support of the federal, as the bond of national existence; and hence the immorality con-

tained in that instrument becomes common to them all.

The recognition of such rights of conscience, is insulting to the Majesty of Heaven, and repugnant to the express letter of God's word. Deut. xvii. 18. God prescribes to the magistrate the divine law, as the supreme standard of all his administrations; and which obliges men, in every station, to conduct themselves accordingly. Deut. xii. 32. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add to it, nor diminish from it." But, in the framing of these constitutions, the revealed law of God is not attended to; though even the law of nature requires the adoption of every new communication which God, in mercy, may be pleased to reveal.

The rejection of the divine law, as revealed in the Scriptures of truth, we consider as a contempt of the beneficence of Heaven, and an obstinate drawing back to heathenism.

3. The government gives a legal security and establishment to gross heresy, blasphemy and idolatry, under the notion of liberty of conscience.

It would be too tedious to examine each of the state constitutions on this head. One may suffice.

We shall select that of the state of Pennsylvania. See the preamble, together with the third and twenty-sixth sections of the ninth article. Here, the constitution recognises and unalterably establishes the indefeasible right of worshipping Almighty God, whatever way a man's conscience may dictate; and declares that this shall, for ever, remain inviolable. We believe that no man has a right to worship God in any other way than he himself hath prescribed in his law. We also

think it criminal for a man's conscience to approve any way repugnant to this sacred rule; and that this crime cannot legitimate another, or make an action right, which God expressly condemns, under pain of eternal wrath.

If conscience can legitimate what God's law condemns, it must be paramount to the divine law, and, consequently, to the Legislator also, in having a negative over the requisitions of both the one and the other.

Were this the case, it would not only free from criminality, but would render virtuous, laudable and praiseworthy, the most damnable errors—the most horrid blasphemies and detestable abominations, if but dictated by the consciences of Pagans, Mahometans, &c. Then, the Egyptians worshipping God under the form of a snake or crocodile as lawful, yea, as commendable, as doing it would be precisely according to the manner which he has prescribed in his word, provided, that, in both cases, conscience said amen!

But supposing for a moment that men had such a right, let us inquire how they came by it? Either they must have it by derivation from God, or hold it independently of him.

It cannot be by derivation from God. It would be absurd in the nature of it, and incompatible with the essential holiness of his character.

To suppose God giving his moral subjects a law, to the breach of which he annexes eternal punishment, and at the same time giving them a right to break it, is inconsistent, and impossible. Right would be opposed to right. A right to obey, and a right not to obey!

Absurd as this may appear, we find the doctrine advocated both from pulpit and press.

Scarcely any where, however, is it more barefacedly maintained than in the following declaration: "To worship God after that way and manner they judge most agreeable to his will, is a right common to all men. They may, and often do, err, and offend the Most High, by substituting a false religion in place of that which he requires: but no power on earth can take their right from them."*

Here there is a certain right established. To do what? To worship God whatever way a man may think most proper. But he may, and often does, think a false way most proper. Well, he has a right to worship the false way! But worshipping the false way offends God. No matter, he has a right to offend God; for, if worshipping falsely, and offending God, are equivalent, seeing he has a right to do the one, he has a right to do the other!!! "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon: lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph." 2d Sam. i. 20.

To maintain that men have a right to break the divine law, is too glaring. Does it not look very like blasphemy, to allow that God has given them such a right? If they have it, therefore, it must be independently of him. It would be pretty nice, to draw the discriminating line between this and atheism.

This pretended right, however, is guarantied to all by the constitution of this state.

Every thing, suggested by conscience, which may not interfere with temporal safety, is un-

* See the Declaration and Testimony of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, Part 1, Sect. 17.

alterably established by the permanent law of the land. Should it dictate obstinately to profess the most damnable heresy, and zealously practise and propagate every absurd and abominable form of idolatry, which a heart given up to strong delusions, vile affections, and a reprobate sense, could make one think innocent, the good people of this state have recognised his right to do so: and solemnly pledged themselves, in their constitutional instrument, to give him security and protection; the solemn prohibition of Almighty God notwithstanding!

Does not this amount to an establishment of religion?

That civil rulers should exercise their power, in protecting and defending the religion of Jesus, we do, and always did, maintain.

The dispute, then, will not turn upon the point, whether religion should be civilly established? (we take it for granted that Americans think so, seeing they have done it,) but it is, concerning what religion ought to be civilly established and protected. Whether the religion of Jesus alone, should be countenanced by civil authority? or every blasphemous, heretical, and idolatrous abomination, which the subtle malignity of the old serpent, and a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, can frame and devise, should be put on an equal footing therewith? The former we contend for, the latter we reject. The latter, however, is the plain doctrine of the constitution.

That it may appear that this is no invidious comment on the articles of that instrument, let us, for a moment, attend to its application to practice, by the legislature. Their views of it will be

considered as impartial. In the discharge of their legislative duty, did they not incorporate a Roman Catholic society in the city of Philadelphia, and grant them special privileges, such as raising money by lottery, &c., for erecting a chapel? Who ever heard any of the approvers of the constitution complain that said law of incorporation was unconstitutional? Indeed, no man of common sense could allow that it was.

If this be an evil, the constitution should be purged from such principles as sanction it; unless it be contended that the people of these states have among them rights, ONE of which authorizes them to give their power to the beast, and prop up the tottering fabric of that man of sin, whom God has threatened to "destroy with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming."

We cannot, in conscience, however ill others may look upon it, swear allegiance to a constitution so friendly to the enemies of Jesus. We are bound in him, and cannot serve two masters. Is this putting of all religious sects upon an equal footing, consistent with the declaration concerning New Testament times, Isaiah xlix. 23: "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers?" Would he not be a hard-hearted father, who would put his child upon the same footing with the wolves, tigers, and other voracious beasts of prey? The political father, who leaves the child Truth in the jaws of enemies, still more deadly, cannot be allowed to possess much more tender feelings. Will the church of Christ enjoy no other privilege than this, by "sucking the breast of kings?" Isaiah lx. 16. "When her officers shall be peace, and her exactors righteousness." Verse 17.

4. We farther object to the civil government

of this country, because its officers are sworn, by necessary implication, to support what God Almighty forbids, as appears from the oath of office. "Members of the general assembly, and all other officers, executive and judicial, shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support the constitution of this commonwealth."*

If, therefore, the constitution of Pennsylvania, as has been already demonstrated, supports, and legally establishes, gross heresy, blasphemy and idolatry, it necessarily follows, that those who swear to support it, are bound by solemn oath to support the above principles and practices; which is nothing more than a practical application of said instrument, in their respective administrations.

Is not this a glaring contradiction of the moral law, not only in its general precepts, such as first, second, and third commandments, &c., but also to the particular illustration of these precepts? See Deut. vii. 5, when speaking of idolaters, "Thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire."

But this obligation, to support gross heresy, &c., is not confined to officers under the constitution. It extends to all who swear allegiance to it, and thus incorporate with the national society upon the footing of this bond of union.

To what purpose is a constitution, if it does not contain a solemn stipulation between each and every individual, and all the rest of the society,

* See the oath of office, Constitution of the State of Pennsylvania, Art. 8.

for the mutual guarantee of the privileges therein specified? We cannot, therefore, swear allegiance, because we dare not be bound, upon pain of perjury, if need be, to spend our blood and treasure in supporting the man of sin, or any of his allies. And I have never been able to satisfy myself, how it was consistent, in those who profess Presbyterianism, to swear an oath, which involve the supporting of idolatry, &c., while, at the same time, in their creeds, and church constitutions, they solemnly recognise their obligation, in their respective stations, to remove every monument and vestige of it from the land.*

5. They make no provision for the interest of true religion. See Federal Constitution, Art. 3. Amendment. And, though there is some appearance to the Christian religion, in some of the state constitutions, such as Massachusetts, Part 1, Art. 3, yet that article respecting the rights of conscience, which lays the foundation, and terminates in the establishment, of every thing called religion, which may not interfere with temporal safety, is "a dead fly" to this precious ointment.

This indifference about the religion of Jesus, is contrary to the law of nature; which requires rulers "chiefly to care for the honour of God, the Governor of nations, and to adopt and enforce his laws, as the best means for promoting the supreme end—which requires that men should be governed, as having immortal souls, and not as mere brute animals, about whose bodies only we are concerned;" contrary to the word of God, which teacheth, "that righteousness exalteth a

* See Larger Catechism, Question 108, as ratified in their church constitutions.

nation, whereas sin, (even blasphemy and idolatry, as well as other sins,) is the reproach of any people." Prov. xiv. 34.

This indifference about the religion of Jesus, is in opposition to the promised blessings in the word of God. The exercise of the magistrate's power, in favour of the true religion, is promised as a blessing in New Testament times. Isai. xlix. 23. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers," &c.

Let the law of God be established as a rule, and that will, of course, establish truth.

The allegation usually brought forward against this position, viz., "that the law of God is so equivocal, that it cannot be understood, and so ought not to be made the basis of legislation," is invalid.

If it be admitted, the divine law is no longer a rule of faith and manners; and God only imposed upon his rational subjects, in giving them a law that was unintelligible, and at the same time annexing the most tremendous penalties to the violation of it. We are usually taught to have other views of the God of mercy and truth.

But can there be any thing plainer, or clearer, than the precepts of the decalogue, in which we have a summary of the moral law, a bright transcript of the perfections of Jehovah? What is all the preceptive part of the Bible, but an elucidation, or comment, upon the precepts respectively? What are all the promises and threatenings, but the sanctions of that law, applied to the respective cases by God, in order to enforce duty, and deter from disobedience?

Would it be considered as warrantable, in a court of justice, to acquit a criminal arraigned at the bar, because he pleads "the law, with respect

to the breach of which I am charged, was unintelligible, [or] I had as good a right to explain it as another. The true meaning of it, I think I have fulfilled. I demand my liberty." Must this law, ever after, cease to be a rule? If this is admitted, there is an end to all government; and men will, as in those days when there was no king in Israel, "do, every man, that which is right in his own eyes."

But, in opposition to this, see the conduct of the pious kings of Judah, 2d Chron. xxxi. and xxxiv. chapters.

6. Another reason why we cannot incorporate with the national society is, because we consider them in a state of national rebellion against God. Jer. x. 7. God announces himself King of nations, unto whom fear and homage appertain: his will, of course, should be the supreme law.

This will of his, as revealed in the book of nature, and imprinted upon the heart of man, in his first creation, was, in a great measure, obliterated by the fall. God, in mercy, has been pleased to send us a written transcript of his will, with valuable enlargements, superior to any thing which could have ever been discovered by the mere light of nature.

If we refuse to receive it, and obstinately prefer the obscure shattered fragments, revealed by nature's light, to the rejection of divine revelation, do we not pour contempt upon the Legislator, and hoist the signal of rebellion? Has this nation, in its national capacity, adopted this law, or has it not?

This point will be ascertained by an examination of their national deeds. If they have not, what is their character? How does the govern-

ment of any country view a province or county, which refuses to receive the laws which they have constitutionally enacted?

They consider them in a state of rebellion; and send their armies to suppress them as rebels. Shall provinces be accounted rebels for refusing to receive the laws of earthly rulers; and shall nations refuse to recognise the laws of the Moral Governor of the universe, and be accounted innocent?

But this is not all. The nation has not only rebelled against God, in refusing to recognise the divine law, but has also been aiding and assisting his enemies, by supporting those that are at war with the Almighty. Witness the protection of idolatry, and all manner of anti-christian delusion. For this, God is very jealous: "He will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images."

Would to God, that, while "the kings of the earth are combined to plot against the Lord, and his Anointed," these lands, highly favoured by benevolent Providence, would neither touch, taste, nor handle the unclean thing. O that they could say, like the two tribes and a half, on the eastern side of Jordan, Jos. xxii. 29: "God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God, that is before the tabernacle."

7. Deists, and even atheists, may be chief magistrates.—See the Federal Constitution.

In this instrument, the belief in the existence of God, is not made a necessary qualification for holding office! Neither is it essentially involved,

in the obligation taken previously to entering upon office. See the last paragraph of the first section of the second article of the Federal Constitution: here a simple affirmation, without even naming the name of God, is considered sufficient!

The allegation, "that an oath involves an appeal to God," is no real objection to what is here asserted. We admit it does. But will it therefore follow, that a simple affirmation is an appeal to God? The Scripture knows no such doctrine. If it did, the institution of an oath would have been useless, as containing nothing specifically different from simple assertion.

Then we would be constantly swearing, or doing what would be equivalent, in our common conversation.

But, in a word, the people, in whose favour it is generally supposed the liberty of affirmation is granted, deny the propriety of all such appeals to God. If it be objected, "that quakers only are intended, and that all such acknowledge the being of God," it may be answered, that they are not specified—others are not excluded—atheists might plead the privilege, and if they were specified exclusively, still there is nothing in the instrument itself, that makes a profession of the belief of a Supreme Being essential. A simple affirmation does not necessarily imply the profession of a belief in a Supreme Being as an oath does. Nor is it inconsistent with the principles of an atheist to affirm or assert.

A belief, therefore, in the existence of a Deity, is not, by the Federal Constitution, either directly or by implication, made a necessary qualification of the first magistrate.

Where is the homage which, it might be ex-

pected, a people professing Christianity would pay to the Messiah? Where is the respect that even a deistical society might be supposed to render to the King of nations?

Nay, at not a very distant period, even so late as the year 1797, the good people of the United States of America, concentrated by representation in the senatorial council and chief magistrate, disclaimed the religion of Jesus, and cast away the cords of the Lord's Anointed, in the ratification of the treaty of peace and friendship with the Bey of Tripoli.

The American plenipotentiary availed himself of it, as an important circumstance in the article of negotiation, that the American government was not predicated upon the Christian religion; and, consequently a government that the Bey might safely treat with. Take it in the words of the treaty itself. "The government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion. It has, in itself, no character of enmity against the laws or religion of a Musselman."* And, what is farther worthy of notice, by the sixth article of the Federal Constitution this treaty is made the supreme law of the land!

Must it not be dishonouring to Christ, and calculated to procure the infliction of his iron rod, thus, nationally, in so many words, to disclaim his holy religion, to count kindred, or at least deny enmity against Mahomet, the vile impostor?

8. The major part of the states recognise the

* See this quotation of Art. xi. of the treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States of America and the Bey and subjects of Tripoli of Barbary, as filed in the Laws of the United States, Vol. 4th.

principle of slavery. Some, partially, and others without taking any steps, as yet, toward its abolition.

Strange it is, indeed, that in a land of such boasted liberty, such horrid inhumanity should be tolerated! It is contrary to the Declaration of Independence, and most of the state constitutions, which justly declare, "that all men are created free and equal, and that Liberty is one of the invaluable rights with which their Creator has endowed them." Is it not strangely inconsistent, that the constitution, the paramount law of the land, should declare all men to be free, and the laws pretended to be constitutional, doom a certain portion of them to hopeless bondage, and subject them to the wanton barbarity of savage and inhuman masters, who, in many instances, treat their brutes with more tenderness?

Time would not allow to enter, at large, into a refutation of it. Indeed it is too shocking to find advocates among any but those whose conscience is seared as with a hot iron. Suffice it to say, at present, that there is one precept given by the Saviour, declared to be a summary of the law and the prophets, viz.; "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. vii. 12. To which the practice of slaveholding is flatly repugnant.

But, supposing the Scripture silent on the subject, it is even impolitic and dangerous. What interest has the man, whom I unjustly detain, to work for me, seeing he receives scarcely any other compensation for his labour, than a hungry belly and hard blows? By what tie is he bound to spare my life, seeing I rob him of that which is

dearer than life itself, and without which life is miserable? Must not the philosopher execrate this nefarious traffic? Must not the philanthropist shed a tear on the bleeding wounds of outraged humanity?

Of this barbarous traffic, the judicatories of our church have given their pointed disapprobation, and all approving of, or engaging in it, are excluded her communion.

9. A last reason why we reject these constitutions is, that we are bound by the moral law, as subjects of the God of heaven, to obey his will; and whatever is contrary thereunto, we are obliged to reject. And to all who censure our conduct in so doing, we reply, "Whether we should obey God or man, judge ye."

This obligation necessarily flows from our relation to God, as the Moral Governor. See Exod. xx. 1, 17, where we have an epitome of his laws. and by this we hold ourselves indispensably bound.

And, moreover, in the exercise of that delegated power, which we hold from God, we have solemnly recognised this moral obligation, by our own act and deed. In the preface to the ten commandments, as delivered on Sinai, God binds himself to be our God: "I am the Lord your God." We are called upon by the laudable example of the saints, by our personal relation to God, and by his own express command, to lay hold upon his covenant, avouch him as our own God in Christ Jesus. We have endeavoured to do so. We have covenanted in our ancestors—in our baptismal engagements—and by our own personal act—in solemnly recognising all these obligations, in commemorating the death of our

crucified Redeemer. We have thus sworn allegiance to the King of heaven, and must reject every thing inconsistent therewith. Dare we pretend to be bound by those covenants, which oblige us to use every lawful endeavour to extirpate heresy, idolatry, and every thing contrary to sound doctrine, and the power of godliness; and, at the same time, swear another oath, which necessarily involves in it their support and protection? On this, let us resolve, with the good old Joshua, "Let others do what they will, as for us and our houses, we will serve the Lord."

But, as we have stated our objections to the civil constitutions of these states, candour requires us to declare, at the same time, that we consider the American government, with all its evils, the best now existing in the Christian world; and, if we know the sentiments of our own souls upon this subject, desire nothing more than its reformation, happiness and prosperity; though we feel bound by our duty to God, to testify against all its immoralities. It will be proper, however, seeing we consider it as immoral, and, in the providence of God, are living under it, to inquire, in the

IX. place, what should be our conduct toward it? And,

1. It is our duty to mourn before God over all the prevailing abominations. This is one of the characters of those who are marked with the broad seal of the Holy Ghost, Ezek. ix. 4. And the Lord said, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof."

We ought, also, to confess and mourn over our own sins, which, no doubt, contribute their share to the procuring and continuance of those evils.

2. We ought to pray for their reformation with earnestness at a throne of grace. 1st Tim. ii. 1, we are commanded to make prayer and supplications for all men; and, Jer. xxix. 7, the captives in Babylon are commanded to "pray for the peace of the city, and cry to the Lord for it, that in its peace they might have peace." This prayer, however, ought not to recognise them in their official capacity; for this would be saying, Amen, to the immorality of the constitution on which they stand. 2d John, 10th and 11th verses, we are commanded, "not to receive impostors into our houses, or bid them God speed, for he that biddeth them God speed, is partaker of their evil deeds." This must respect them as deceivers, and not as men, for we are commanded to "pray for all men." 2d Tim. ii. 1.

3. We ought to use every lawful endeavour to promote reformation, such as rational arguments, and decent remonstrances: thus, 1st Kings xii. 3, 4: "Jeroboam and all the congregation, came to Rehoboam, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous, now, therefore, make the grievous service of thy father, and the heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." To reason, remonstrate, and expostulate with the generation, on this subject, as well as on others of truth or duty, we are bound, by the love we ought to exercise toward our fellow-brethren of men, in not suffering sin to lie upon them, without informing them of it—by the obligation we are under to promote the interest of religion, and the advancement of Immanuel's kingdom, and by the express

command of God. Isai. lviii. 1: "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Israel their sins." See, also, Ezek. xxxiii. 1, 9, where we are told that, if the watchman neglect to warn the people of the enemy's approach, if they die in their sins, their blood shall be required at his hand; but, if he be faithful, and give warning, whether they hear or forbear, he shall deliver his own soul.

4. We ought to do no act which may justly be considered an homologation of their illegitimate authority.

Those who, directly or indirectly, consent to the evil deeds of others, are partakers in their criminality. Ps. i. 18: "When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him:" which God severely reprehends. If, therefore, the constitution be essentially at war with the religion of Jesus, an homologation of it is striking hands with his enemies. No oath of allegiance, therefore, can we swear; because we believe the constitution to be contrary to the moral law, and our covenant engagements. Farther,

We cannot elect public functionaries to fill the various offices in the state; for between the elector and the elected there is a representative oneness; so that every official act, done constitutionally by the latter, is virtually done by the former through his representative organ. He must, also, be introduced to office by an oath homologating the constitution. Whatever, therefore, we cannot do ourselves on account of its immorality, we ought not to employ others to perform.

Neither may we accept of any office to which an oath is annexed, obliging either, first, to sup-

port an immoral constitution, or, secondly, to apply, or judge, under the direction of an immoral law. First, to support an immoral constitution. Such are all offices considered by the constitution as belonging either to the executive or judicial departments in this state. An oath, to this amount, is expressly required of all officers, executive and judicial.* Secondly, to apply, or judge, under the direction of an immoral law. Of this sort we consider serving on juries. The juror must come under an obligation to determine the law and facts.†

This must, certainly, be a determining what is the true spirit and meaning of the law, and its application to the particular fact under consideration. Did it mean a determining whether the law be moral or immoral, and so, such as ought, or ought not, to be carried into operation, juries would possess a negative over the legislature, and render their decisions unobligatory and useless? They are, therefore, bound to apply the existing law, in its true spirit and meaning, to the case immediately under deliberation.‡

If the civil code contain laws in themselves immoral, we ought not to come under any obligation to determine cases by them, or judge under their direction.

* See the Constitution of Pennsylvania, Art. 8th.

† See the Constitution of Pennsylvania, Art. 9th, Sect. 7th.

‡ It will be no real objection to the above, that in some courts, the oath is administered to the jurors, "to determine according to the evidence," without mentioning the law. The law is still implied, otherwise, the jury are above the law, and there is an end to all legislation. It is to be feared jurors often impose on themselves in this particular.

Though we believe most of the laws in the civil code to be just and equitable, yet there are some exceptions.

Such are all laws agreeable to, and predicated upon, the immoral part of the constitution, *e. g.*, laws incorporating Roman Catholic societies, &c. Such, also, are some laws which are unconstitutional, *e. g.*, laws recognising the right of holding slaves for life, and indemnifying masters where slaves are capitally punished.*

Supposing a case, in which any of these immoral laws are concerned, comes before a jury; for example, a suit, in which a master pleads his right of holding one of his fellow-brethren a slave for life, and his brother pleads his right of being free, what is the juror bound by his oath to do in this particular case? The poor man was unfortunately, (but through no fault of his,) born before the 1st of March, 1780, and was registered, in due form of law, before the 1st of November, same year, and is, therefore, legally, a slave. The moral law says he is free. Agreeably to which of these laws, thus opposite to each other, does the juror's oath bind him to find a verdict? If agreeably to the moral law, the law of the state is set aside, and the legislature is controlled by the jury.† But if his verdict be agreeable to the law of the state, in that case made and provided, the law of God is set aside—the Majesty of heaven is insulted, and the rights of humanity outraged and trampled upon, by those who ought to protect

* See Read's Digest, page 265.

† In this case, the juror's oath must be considered as null and void, or else broken; for he has acted flatly contrary thereto.

them. We cannot, conscientiously, put ourselves into such a predicament.*

But farther, we may not engage in any service, which is regulated by, or puts us under, the control of any immoral law. Engaging in the militia, when called out to actual service, may come under this consideration. We thus pledge ourselves, by our own act and deed, if need be, to fight in defence of any one of the existing laws, under all existing penalties, in such cases made and provided. Who knows, but while on duty, he may be commanded to spill his blood in support of a mass-house, or at the cannon's mouth, protect the graven images of the gross idolater, which God has expressly commanded to be destroyed? Deut. vii. 5. We ought not, therefore, to put ourselves into a situation, in which we know, that a thing, in itself immoral, may be legally commanded, under the specific penalties, while we stand pledged, by our own act and deed, to yield obedience.

* In no case does the violation of the divine law appear more flagrant than in the law of Pennsylvania respecting murder. God expressly commands, in the most pointed manner, Gen. ix. 6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." And Numb. xxxv. 31, "Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death." Verse 33: "And the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

The divine law distinguishes between man-slaughter and murder; but not between murder of the first degree, and murder of the second. How flatly contradictory to the law of God is the law of Pennsylvania, which declares that, after April 22, 1794, "No crime whatsoever, (except murder of the first degree,) shall be punished with death in the state of Pennsylvania." See Read's Digest, page 288. How could a juror, who was a Bible believer, act in this case?

5. We may do every thing commanded, which is in itself right and lawful; provided it be not clogged by some immoral circumstance.

This will account for our refusing to avail ourselves of the rights, execute the offices, or engage in the services mentioned in the last particular: though there is no criminality in the things themselves, yet they are connected with such circumstances as we deem immoral.

Many things, not criminal in themselves, ought to be abstained from, on this account. For example, it would not be considered as unlawful, in itself, for a Presbyterian to go to Rome, suppose to make some mercantile arrangements; but, provided that allegiance to the holy see, and worshipping the host, were made a condition of his entering that city, he ought surely not to go thither. In like manner, the offices, &c. which we refuse, though all lawful, considered in themselves, yet, since they cannot be engaged in, unconnected with some immorality, ought not to be accepted at all. But all other things commanded by the constituted authorities, which are neither in themselves unlawful, nor connected with unlawful circumstances, may be done, not because they are commanded by legitimate authority, (which is the true *tessera* of loyalty) but, either because the moral law requires them, or because we may be compelled to do them by physical force. This may happen to be the case, in those things which are not in themselves morally evil; and when commanded to do such things under heavy pains, of these two physical evils, we may lawfully choose the least. Thus, I may give away part of my property, to save the remainder, though the man who demands it has no other right than physical force, or a power of compelling obedience.

6. We ought to wait patiently, under these disadvantages, till the Lord be pleased to bring back again the captivity of Zion. Thus, the weeping prophet observes, Lam. iii. 26. "It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Our principles may, indeed, subject us to much inconvenience; but we ought, like Moses, to prefer affliction with the people of God to the treasures of Egypt, and the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season; keeping our eye upon the recompense of reward. Heb. xi. 25, 26.

Is it reasonable to expect, that, while the Dragon's successors are in power, and the rulers of the earth endeavouring to heal the wounds of the beast, the woman and her seed will return from the wilderness? Rev. xii. 14, 17. The time, times, and half a time, or twelve hundred and sixty years, are not yet closed, since she fled thither on eagle's wings, during which period she should lay her accounts with embarrassments and tribulations.

Nay, there is reason to expect, that still more tremendous scenes of persecution and carnage yet await the church, than any she has hitherto experienced. The Witnesses have not yet finished their testimony. One point yet remains to be sealed with their blood, namely, the Mediator's headship over the nations. 'Tis not unlikely, that this is one of the articles for which the witnesses shall be slain, when, as we read, Rev. xi. 8, 9, "they shall lie dead three days and a half," which is equal to three years and a half, in prophetic language. But they shall have a glorious resurrection, when these three days and a half are expired. And though we should not live to see these happy days, let us rejoice in the consideration,

that we have been endeavouring, in our civil and religious systems, to anticipate the millennial period when Jesus shall reign in Jerusalem, in Mount Zion, and before his ancients, gloriously. And, if we are faithful and conscientious in doing so, God will say to us, as he did to David, respecting his intention of building the temple, "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart."

7. We ought to live peaceable and regular lives, "giving no offence to Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God." 1st Cor. x. 32. "To adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Tit. ii. 10. To oppose all riotous and seditious practices, which may arise to injure the peace and prosperity of the land wherein we live—to comply with the common order of society, in all things in themselves lawful—to live as citizens of the world, and not incorporate ourselves with the national society, in any of their political movements; looking up for the day of our redemption, when God's appointed time for favouring Zion shall come. But as the doctrines advanced in the preceding part of this discourse are unpopular with the present generation, it may be necessary, in the

X. place, to obviate some of the leading objections which are usually made thereto.

Objection 1. The apostle, Rom. xiii. 1, informs us, that all power is of God—"There is no power but of God," consequently, we owe conscientious obedience to every power. To this, it may be answered,—There are two kinds of power, viz. physical and moral; both are of God: for "in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts xvii. 28.

By the exercise of the first, all actions, just and unjust, are performed. In the exercise of this

physical power, Paul persecuted the church of Jesus: by the same power, he laboured, with unwearied industry, in the propagation of the doctrines of the cross. This power, therefore, is common to all actions, whether moral or immoral, that come to pass in the providence of God. The

Second, is not only providential, but also moral and preceptive, and respects those things which God in his law requires as the duty of moral subjects to perform.

Is it the first or the second of those that every soul is commanded to be subject unto, under the penalty of damnation, mentioned under the passage now under consideration?

If the first, then it is a damnable sin to resist the Devil! For he is a "power," and in the providence of God, as prince of this world, he rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. But this cannot be the case, for God has strictly charged us to resist him. James iv. 7. Were this the case, then we would incur Jehovah's wrath, in resisting lions, tigers, and other beasts of prey: for in the providence of God, they possess more physical power than we do, and have also derived it from God.

Then, at the risk of damnation, would tyrants and usurpers be resisted, and the justly exploded doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance would be recognised under pain of Jehovah's high displeasure!! And to crown all, the people of these states, who justly and valiantly resisted the wicked domination of the British tyrant, would have thereby rendered themselves obnoxious to damnation!!!

This doctrine, however, is too grossly ridiculous to merit much serious attention. I conclude,

therefore, that the power in question is of the moral and preceptive kind: unto which obedience is enjoined, under such heavy penalties. To this we heartily subscribe; and believe that none else can bind the conscience, or be entitled to conscientious subjection.

This will, moreover, appear evident, by attending to the qualifications of that power unto which we are commanded to be subject, in the passage alluded to. See Rom. xiii. 1, 7.

Obj. 2. But God has commanded to be subject unto them for conscience sake. Rom. xiii. 5. And 1st Pet. ii. 13.

Ans. The power alluded to, in the first of the quotations, was already proved to be moral and preceptive. This must necessarily be the case, with all power entitled to obedience, for conscience sake. If a power contrary to the divine law be entitled to conscientious obedience, God is no longer the exclusive Lord of the conscience, but it is subject even to the illegitimate dominion of men. It is true, many things commanded by immoral powers, when not in their natures sinful, we may be obliged to perform, and even these actions, as well as others, should be done conscientiously. For example, were I enslaved by an Algerine pirate, and sold to a cruel master, I ought not, by fractious and stubborn conduct, to procure myself the bastinado, or turn the rod of chastisement into a venomous serpent. I am in his power, and so should behave obsequiously, in all things in themselves lawful, that I may lighten my chain, and alleviate the evils which I cannot avoid. Such a course of conduct my conscience should approve. But on what account? Is it because my conscience approves of his right to keep me in slavery?

Nay, is it not rather because my conscience approves of using every innocent means, which the laws of self-preservation may dictate, to alleviate my present misery?

This principle is equally applicable to a people under unjust and immoral governments; and to no other kind of subjection was Nero, the monster at the head of the Roman empire, when the apostle gave the above directions, entitled. Did he possess any of the characters connected with that power, unto which obedience for conscience sake is enjoined? If we give credit to the historians of his age, he was the very reverse of all these. The brutal barbarities of his reign are too notorious to require rehearsal, and too shocking to the feelings to be told, when necessity does not demand it. But still, it is objected, "that even though he was such a monster, yet all his lawful commands ought to be obeyed." To this, it may be observed; that he who has no moral right to command, can give no lawful commands. A command presupposes a power commanding. The legality or illegality of the command is determined by the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the power from which it flows. "Who (says the inspired penman) can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."

An immoral power may command what is in itself lawful, and which may and ought to be done; yet, as a moral authority is necessary to constitute a lawful command, the latter cannot exist where the former is wanting. Suppose, for example, my neighbour, who has no civil or religious authority over me, should come to my house, and authoritatively command me to worship God in my family, and conscientiously perform the duties

of my station: all this I am bound to do, because it is right, but does any part of my obligation arise from his command? His command was without authority; and, when this imposes moral obligation, we need not think it strange to find sons who have had no fathers—wives who have no husbands—and things existing in plenty, without their necessary correlates.

It is farther objected here, "that the apostle could not have had any other particularly in view, but Nero, or, at least that he must be meant; because it would otherwise render the precept useless, as to any immediate application to existing circumstances."

This objection is repugnant to daily experience. Were it just, then all instruction of youth, to fill the various departments of social life, to which they might be destined, when grown to maturity, would be useless and inexpedient. To what purpose, then, would God have given Israel a constitution and laws, for their kings to walk by, while they were yet in the wilderness? See Deut. xvii. 15.

Obj. 3. "But even the worst of rulers, such as Hazael, &c., are said to be anointed of God, 1st Kings xix. 15, and so should be considered legitimate."

Ans. The general signification of anointing, is a setting apart for some particular service. Thus, though God denominates the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, the "rod of his anger," he also designates them by the name of his "sanctified" or anointed "ones." Isai. xiii. 3. As for Hazael's unction, it was only setting him apart to be a scourge and plague to Israel, on account of their sins—"to rip up their women with child—dash

their children—slay their young men, and fire their strong-holds." 2d Kings viii. 12.

To such work, that, when foretold by the prophet Elisha, he replies, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

God, in his providence, sometimes sets apart earthquakes, pestilence, locusts, &c., as the ministers of his wrath, and executors of his vengeance; but, what argument can be brought from this to prove that we ought to yield obedience, for conscience sake, to immoral power, whether the immorality lie in the constitution or the administration?

Obj. 4. "But the saints accepted offices, and held places of trust, under heathen princes. See the cases of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, in the books called by their names."

If the saints thus accepted offices, &c., we may conclude, either *first*, that the power was *legitimate*—or *second*, that offices may be held under *illegitimate* governments, or *third*, that the saints sinned in accepting them.

Ans. The second proposition we grant. The first and third we deny.

Let us inquire whether, because Daniel lawfully held an office in Babylon, either of these two propositions will necessarily follow, viz., *first*, that he recognised the government in Babylon as legitimate; or *second*, that we may lawfully hold and execute all offices, without exception, under the American constitution?

As to the *first* of these, I would observe, the principles laid down in the fourth particular of the preceding head of this discourse, respecting the holding of offices, &c., if justly applied, will solve this question. There are laid down in that

place certain principles, ascertaining what offices *may not be held* without homologating an immoral constitution. Here I would lay down a principle, which may be of use to ascertain positively, what offices *may be held*, without criminality, be the government never so wicked.

Any office may be held, or service engaged in, upon the three following conditions:

1st. That the duties belonging to it be right in themselves.

2d. That they be regulated by a just law.

3d. That there be no other oath of office required, but faithfully to execute official duties. Let these be the stipulations, and an office may be held under any power, however immorally constituted, without an homologation of its immorality.

Suppose I were in Algiers, residing there at pleasure; would my accepting an office from the Dey, under the regulations now specified, say professorship in a university instituted by him, for the instruction of youth, be an homologation of his immoral regency—naval piracy—or the blood and murder upon which his throne is erected? If there as a *slave*, would not the appointment be still more eligible? This corresponds with the situation of the captives in Babylon: it does not, therefore, follow, that holding an office necessarily supposes, either that the government be lawful, or if not, that the person holding the office is implicated in the immorality.

With respect to the second thing, supposed to follow from Daniel's holding an office in Babylon, viz., that we may hold any office, without exception, under the American constitution, it may be observed, that in order to this the cases must be parallel, and then it will be readily granted. But

the cases are vastly different. The immorality of the Babylonish government was indefinite. They had no fixed constitution. The monarch was legislator. His will was the law of the realm. Dan. v. 19. "Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive." We are not certain whether there was any thing essential to this government but mere physical force, and that is neither moral nor immoral in itself. But in the American constitutions almost every thing is specific, and essential to the social compact. And, though we are no advocates for absolute government, where the monarch's will is the law; nay, though we think that constitutions and laws cannot be too specific and definite; yet, we are of opinion, offices may be held under absolute princes, whose wills are limited by no fixed constitution, without being implicated in any criminality, when they cannot be so held under some more specifically constituted. In these, offices are usually entangled with the immorality of the constitution, to which, also, allegiance is, in almost all cases, required. In those, there is no immoral constitution to swear allegiance to. And if the monarch's will, which resembles a standing legislature, command that which is immoral, it ought not to be obeyed any more than an unjust law, even when there is a just and moral constitution. Daniel had not, therefore, to swear to support an immoral constitution, for there was none.

If it be pleaded, that the monarch's will was the constitution, this, even if admitted, makes no difference. The office was either such as required allegiance to this constitution, or it did not. If the latter, it is the thing contended for, viz., that there was no immoral obligation connected with

his office. If the former, he was perjured, not only by breaking it in several instances, but in taking it also, for he swore to a blank, i. e., to perform he knew not what. But there is no account of Daniel's coming under any such obligation. Indeed, it would have been inconsistent with the smiles of Heaven, which he, and others in office, evidently enjoyed.

Let us suppose a case, similar to that of Daniel, and another, similar to our situation, at present, under the American constitutions. This may serve as an illustration of the general principle here contended for.

Let one man be taken prisoner by a party of Indians, intending to explore the head waters of the Mississippi. They have no particular system laid down for regulating their conduct during the expedition. They are under the command of a chief, whose will is the law, and who has power to punish in case of disobedience. Let another, in Providence, be residing among a party engaged in the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, and now and then trafficking in furs, the product of their hunting excursions. Let this party have a small system of rules, specifically providing for every office that may be necessary in the community. Let all the rules of this little system be just and equitable, save one. Suppose the exceptionable one to be, that every morning and evening, the officers shall take care that those under their respective charges, shall pow wow, or worship the Devil, as it is said some of the Indian tribes are accustomed to do. Let an oath to support and maintain this little code be made, by the community, an essential qualification of holding any office.

Now, supposing these two men are called to

accept offices in their respective tribes, may they both comply with good consciences?

Or rather, may not the one, of whom no immoral stipulation is required, safely do it; and, if commanded to do what is wrong, imitate Daniel, who, at the risk of his life, disobeyed the king's commandment: whereas, the other may not accept, for he is introduced to office by a stipulation which violates the moral law. The application of this is abundantly evident.

Obj. 5. "But the saints prayed for them, Gen. xlvii. 7, 10, and Dan. vi. 21. And in 1st Tim. ii. 2, they are commanded to do so. Must they not, therefore, be considered as legitimate rulers?"

Ans. If they be immorally constituted, prayer for them, as such, is plainly contrary to the command of God, 2d John 10th and 11th verses. As men, they ought to be prayed for, according to the command of God, 1st Tim. ii. 1, where we are ordered to make "prayers and intercessions for all men." As to the command to pray for kings, &c., 1st Tim. ii. 2, it is evident it respected moral rulers, who conduct their administrations so that godliness, true piety, and honesty, may be promoted among their subjects.

Obj. 6. "The saints addressed them for justice, Acts xxv. 10, 12, and xxvi. 32, where the apostle appeals unto Cæsar."

To this I answer, an appeal to their tribunals no more involves in it an homologation of their lawful dominion, than an appeal from a murderer to a thief, who would be disposed to save one's life, would be an homologation of his living habitually in the breach of the eighth commandment. Suppose, for example, that the Allegheny mountains were infested with a banditti of robbers, whose

captain retained still so much humanity as to establish a law, that no poor man should be robbed of more than ten dollars—you happen to be crossing the mountain—five of the gang approach you, and rob you of one hundred, which is nearly your all—you meet with the master of the fraternity—you know the law—and believe that he still has as much humanity remaining as will induce him to execute it. Will you appeal to him to cause your ninety dollars to be refunded, which are due to you by his own law? If you do, will this implicate you in the immorality of the banditti, or be saying Amen to their unlawful practice? Certainly not. If this hold in the greater, it will surely hold in the less. If an appeal may be made to the captain of a band of robbers, without implication in his criminality, much more to these institutions, which, though wrong in some fundamentals, are yet aiming at the good of civil society.

Obj. 7. "Christ himself both paid tribute, and commanded his disciples to pay it, and that even to Cæsar, Matt. xvii. 27, and xxii. 21. Was not this an acknowledgment of his authority?"

Ans. Simple payment of tribute never was considered as any homologation of the authority imposing it. It may be given to the worst of tyrants, if not demanded as a *tessera* of loyalty.

We might ask here, Do the people of the United States homologate the authority of the Dey of Algiers, or, for conscience sake, recognise him as their legitimate ruler, when they pay their annual tribute to the haughty Musselman? Do they think that the Dey has any moral right to demand such a thing? Do they not rather go upon the principle, that it is better to give a part to save the remainder, than, by withholding, lose all?

Such a course of conduct may be prudent and innocent with any band of robbers.

The allegation brought from Matt. xvii. 27, is evidently unfounded. See the passage.

The best commentators consider the tribute here mentioned to be temple money, the ransom of the soul spoken of, Exod. xxx. 12, 13. That this was the case will appear evident, first, because the piece of money found in the fish's mouth is allowed, by the best critics, to be equal in value to two half shekels, one for Christ, and the other for Peter. And, secondly, from the argument by which our Lord pleads exemption, namely, from the example of the kings of the earth. "What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, then are the children free." Here we find, by the example of earthly kings, Christ was free. How was he free? By being the Son to the King to whom the tribute belonged. Who was this King? It could not be Cæsar. Was Christ Cæsar's son? No. For had he been Cæsar's son, it must have been, either by natural generation, adoption, or citizenship. None of all these was the case. And even though the last had taken place, which is the only plausible supposition, (though false,) it would not have procured this immunity, because citizenship did not exempt from tribute. But Jesus was the Son of the God of heaven, that King to whom this tribute belonged; hence he says, "notwithstanding," that is, though I am free, by the relation of Sonship, &c.

The other allegation brought from Matt. xxii.

21, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," &c., is equally unfounded.

It is abundantly evident, from the passage, that the question was intended to insnare the Lord Jesus Christ, answer as he would. It was proposed by the Herodians, and Pharisees; those, votaries for Roman domination, and these, the sticklers for Jewish immunities.

Had he said, "Give it to Cæsar," the Pharisees, ever ready to accuse him, would have represented him to the people as an enemy to their ancient privileges. Had he said, "Don't give it," the Herodians would have represented him to Herod as an enemy to the government of Cæsar. In the fifteenth verse, we are expressly told, they came to him with a view to "entangle him in his talk." But he, "knowing their craftiness," split their dilemma, and left their question undecided. He, on several other occasions, thus baffled his adversaries; as in John viii. 4, 12, in the case of the "woman taken in adultery;" and in Luke xii. 14, when application was made to him concerning the settlement of the earthly inheritance. It is objected here, by some, "that this explanation of our Saviour's answer represents the Lord as shunning to declare the whole counsel of God—giving no answer in a case respecting sin and duty." The inference is false. They were not without information on this very subject. They had the law and the prophets. The Lord Jesus Christ had given specific directions concerning the character of lawful rulers, Deut. xvii. 15, to whom it was lawful to pay tribute for conscience sake. But it was not information they wanted, but to insnare him, let him answer as he would, as has already been shown. If silence, or

refusing to answer in every case, even in matters respecting sin and duty, let the design of the querist be what it will, be accounted criminal, in what point of light will the objector view the Lord Jesus Christ, when he finds him actually refusing to answer a question respecting sin and duty, in the case of his own authority? Mark xi. 27, 33. "Neither do I tell you (says he) by what authority I do these things." It would be well if men would consider the awful consequences of some of their objections before they make them.

But, supposing that Christ, in both the instances alluded to, had commanded tribute to be paid to Cæsar, what does it prove? Unless he commanded it to be paid as a *tessera* of loyalty, it proves no more the morality of Cæsar's right, than a minister of the gospel's advising one of his hearers to give the robber part of his property, to secure the remainder, would, that the minister considered the robber morally entitled to it.

Obj. 8. "But you make use of the money which receives its currency from their sanction; and you support them by paying tribute, &c. Why not swear allegiance, hold offices?" &c.

Ans. We make use of the money, to be sure; but when we give an equivalent for it, by industry or otherwise, it is our own property; and, another man's stamping his name upon our coats, is no reason why we should throw them away.

It must be granted, also, that we do support them by paying tribute, &c. So do we the robber, unto whom we give a part to save the remainder. But will it therefore follow that I may legally swear allegiance to him, or become one of his officers, in the business of robbery and plunder?

Obj. 9. "You swear oaths administered by

them, and hold deeds of land, &c., whose validity rests entirely on their sanction."

Ans. Administration is not essential to an oath. It is no part of it. An oath is a solemn appeal to God, in which we call him to witness the truth of what we assert or promise, and to be an avenger, in case of perjury. Administration is nothing more than arranging the matter and expression of the oath into due form. This may be done, either by the person himself who swears, or proposed by another; and, if in itself equitable, may be adopted by the juror, be the proposer whomsoever he may.

Should a robber meet me on the highway, and upon finding that I had no money, put his bayonet to my breast; and should it appear evidently that he intended to kill me unless I would solemnly engage to take or send him a certain sum of money in a given time, say fifty dollars, ought I not to comply? If I do, the oath is the result of mutual stipulation, which existing circumstances render eligible. It seems to me immaterial whether the overture originates with him or with me. In either case, I consider it lawful to give fifty dollars to save my life. Would swearing this oath, if proposed by the robber, be any recognition of his right to my property? Where would be the difference, should my life be saved, by another coming under similar engagements for me with my consent? Whatever difference there is between this illustration, and appearing in common courts of justice, to plead, or be impleaded, where oaths are necessary to a decision, is in favour of the position contended for; inasmuch as the persons before whom the affair is transacted are considered as possessing honour and respectability.

With respect to the other allegation, viz., "The holding land by tenures whose validity depends upon their sanction," it is also unfounded.

Does bargaining with a man for any article, in all cases, recognise the morality of the means whereby he became possessed of the said article? If it does so, then, should any foreign power conquer America, (which God forbid,) and declare all tenures of land null and void, which did not proceed from the new order of things, it would be criminal to hold them thus, and so the land must be vacated, and its planters flee somewhere else for an asylum. But, supposing they found things similar wherever they go, must they leave this world altogether? They must neither eat nor drink of the produce of the land held by this immoral tenure; for, by the hypothesis, the cultivator holds it by an immoral tenure, and so, no bargain should be made with him, more than with the power from which the deed originally issues. Might I not rent a room of my own house, which a man has deprived me of, and now holds legally, though by an immoral tenure, without thereby recognising the morality of his right? If I may rent it, may I not give an article in writing, securing the payment to him and the tenure to me? If I may do so with one room, may I not do so with the whole house and tenement thereunto belonging? If I may rent the whole, may I not also purchase it, putting the bargain under similar securities as above mentioned? If this be lawful, how can the case under consideration be unlawful?

Obj. 10. "But, when rulers are in possession, by the voice of the majority, have they not, therefore, a claim to conscientious obedience?" To this I

Answer. Nations, as well as individuals, are

bound to act agreeably to the divine law. If their conduct is repugnant thereto, it can confer no right, nor establish any obligation.

The act of a majority can never legitimate what God has prohibited under pain of his displeasure. If it could, then it would necessarily follow that all things usually called right or wrong, are, in themselves, indifferent; that the Bible has no definite meaning, in itself, but takes it altogether from the opinions of men, and so will equally authenticate two systems, though diametrically opposite to each other!

Neither possession, therefore, nor majority, can give a right, in opposition to the divine law. Possession may vest in one, and the right in another, as in the case of Solomon and Adonijah, 1st Kings i. 5. Both possession and majority may vest in one person, and the right in another, as in the case of David and Absalom, 2d Sam. xv. 10, and xvii. 14. The voice of the people is to be considered as the preceptive voice of God only when they act agreeably to this law; but, when the contrary, it neither establishes right nor constitutes obligation. Hence, Hos. viii. 4: "They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not." The charge, here, must necessarily respect the neglect of the precept, for none could be advanced to civil dignity without his providence. A sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his providential permission.

Obj. 11. "The restraint and punishment of idolaters, blasphemers, and gross heretics, which you contend for, belonged to the Jewish theocracy, which was typical, and so ought not to be imitated."

Ans. This objection is extremely popular, and deserves minute attention.

It cannot be better answered, than in the words of the late Rev. John Brown, minister of the Seceding Church, in Haddington, North Britain, in his Treatise on Toleration, page 57. He defies his antagonist to prove that these instances of the restraint and punishment of idolatry, &c., by the Jewish rulers were merely typical. He goes on to observe, thus: "The typical magistrates of the Jewish nation also exercised laws relative to murder, theft, unchastity, treason, and other matters of the second table of the law." Ought, therefore, no magistrates now to do so? The laws respecting the duties of the second table pertained as much to the Jewish theocracy as those relating to the first. Must, therefore, the Christian magistrate, for fear of copying the Jewish theocracy, meddle with no morality at all? Must every thing that was once typical, be now, under the gospel, excluded from regulating authority? Must all the excellent patterns of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David, and other Hebrew saints, be rejected as typical and useless? Must all the laws directing to elect men fearing God, and hating covetousness, to be magistrates; or, directing men to judge justly, and impartially, and prudently, and to punish murderers, adulterers, thieves, robbers, &c., be discarded as typical? Must the weekly Sabbath, public fasts, and thanksgivings, be laid aside as typical, a mere sign between God and the Israelites? Must the ten commandments, and all the explications of them in the Old Testament be discarded, as published in a typical manner, and to a typical people, and used

as the principal part of their rule of government in the Jewish theocracy? As the Jewish Church was a real church, and not merely typical, so their state was a real commonwealth or kingdom, and not merely typical: whatever, therefore, pertained to it, as a real commonwealth, is imitable in any other. The Jewish church and state were as really distinct as the church and state are now, though I do not say precisely in the same manner." This learned and pious author proceeds to show wherein they were distinct, which he does in ten different particulars, which would be too tedious to detail here.

Those who would desire to see this subject largely and judiciously investigated, will find it in the first part of Gillespie's Aaron's Rod Blossoming, Book I., Chaps. 1, 2, 3, &c.

Mr. Brown still farther shows wherein the Jewish and the Christian magistrate agree. This he does in fourteen different particulars, which the inquisitive reader will find in the sixtieth, sixty-first, and sixty-second pages of the treatise cited above.

Obj. 12. "Your principles are contrary to the fourth section of the twenty-third article of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which teaches, 'that infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him.'"

Ans. The sense in which the General Assembly, as also the current of reformers and martyrs of the seventeenth century, understood this passage, is fully stated in our Testimony, as also in the letter from Stirling, by the Rev. John M'Millan, jun. They distinguished between reformed

and enlightened lands and those that were unreformed and unenlightened. In the latter many things may be borne with which ought not to be suffered in the former; particularly, when, by a solemn national act, they have made Scriptural qualifications essential to the civil constitution. This our ancestors did in their Covenants, National and Solemn League. All ranks and conditions in the realm solemnly swore to use every lawful endeavour to extirpate popery, prelacy, &c. It might have been inquired, would swearing allegiance to a constitution, afterwards erected upon the ruins of this, of which the support and establishment of any of these abhorred abominations was made an essential part, have been a means well calculated to promote the intention of their oath? This was exactly the situation of the lands of our nativity.

Prelacy, which had been nationally abjured, was made essential to the British constitution; and the king solemnly swore, in his coronation oath, to support it.

Were not these two oaths, viz., one, to extirpate prelacy, and another, to support it, flatly contradictory? To swear the latter is a declaring the former unobligatory, and, consequently, criminal, when originally entered into. Can any one, professing friendship to the reformation of these times, thus barefacedly pronounce its sentence of condemnation!!

Let the authority of the magistrate be just and legal, we will then hold ourselves conscientiously bound to yield obedience.

No authority can be just and legal, with which a contradiction to the moral law is essentially incorporated. Simple infidelity will not render it

unjust, either in a heathen country or in one emerging from pagan darkness. Neither will simple difference in religion make it void, when the nation have not by their own solemn act and deed made conformity an essential article of their constitution.

There may be many defects in a civil constitution, and yet is morally binding upon a nation: but where plain immorality, or a solemn obligation to support what the Legislator of the universe prohibits, under the severest penalties, is essentially incorporated therewith, it cannot bind the conscience.

Obj. 13. "Your principles lead to persecution, and are cruel and unmerciful."

Ans. The church of Christ never persecuted. If our principles lead to it, they are certainly wrong.

But what is persecution? Does it consist in executing God's law? If it does, he must be the author of it. Does it not rather consist in injuring men in their characters, property, or persons, for their tenacious and steadfast adherence to his divine commandments? If this is not persecution, then the martyrs have suffered not for the cause and testimony of Jesus, but for their obstinate rebellion against it. How does this correspond with the character of those souls whom John saw lying under the altar, "who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held?" Rev. vi. 9. Whatsoever the law of God commands to be punished, ought to be punished with the penalties therein made and provided; but God has commanded gross heretics, blasphemers, and idolaters, to be punished with certain specified penalties. Therefore, such ought to be punished.

These commands could not belong to the ceremonial law; for then they would have flowed entirely from the arbitrary will of God, and been mere signs between him and Israel. Who would dare to think so of gross heresy, &c.? Neither could they belong to that part of the judicial law which respected the Jews peculiarly. Who would dare to say that none but the Jews were, or are, under obligation to worship God in purity, or abstain from blaspheming his name and dignity? They must, therefore, belong to the moral law, and flow from the moral nature of Jehovah, who has declared he will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images.

Thus we find the first, second, and third precepts of the moral law pointedly prohibiting these things, and requiring the contrary duties. All the precepts and threatenings which are to be found respecting these scattered up and down the Bible, are only elucidations of those commandments.

I would leave this particular, with proposing one question, which the judicious reader will easily solve. Was Elijah a persecutor when he caused the law of God to be executed upon the prophets of Baal?

Obj. 14. "But the constitution makes provision for its own amendment; if, therefore, you think it wrong, why don't you join and elect good representatives, who may be instrumental in rectifying it?"

Ans. A representative must swear to support the constitution before he can take a seat in the legislative assembly. This oath we have already shown to be immoral, and such as we cannot, in good conscience, swear ourselves; what, therefore, we cannot do ourselves, on account of its immorality, we ought not to employ others to do for us.

We are bound by the moral law and our covenant engagements to extirpate all heresy, blasphemy, and idolatry, as far as our influence can extend. We consider it not only unlawful, but also a very unlikely means to effect this desirable end, first to swear an oath which necessarily involves supporting them. Would not this be "doing evil, that good might come" of it? which the apostle pointedly condemns.

Supposing we were certain that a reform in these evils would be obtained next day, nay, even the next hour; should we swear an unlawful oath to obtain it, we would be violating the command of the Most High, and incurring his severe displeasure. But, farther, by our own solemn act and deed, we would tie up our hands from effecting the thing desired, unless we account the initiating oath unobligatory, and so mock God in taking it. Should a bill be brought into the house to make the Bible the supreme law of the land, would such a bill be constitutional? That it would not, does not require proof. I am sworn to support the constitution. How shall I behave? There is no alternative, but either to reject that law which is a transcript of the moral perfections of Jehovah, or commit perjury: unless I consider my oath to support the constitution unobligatory, and thus mock God, and impose upon society. Surely I ought not to put myself in any predicament in which I may be brought to the awful dilemma of either rejecting the Bible, or committing perjury! Nor would it satisfy the conscience to sit silent, and give no vote. This would be a silent acquiescence in the violation of the constitution which I was sworn to support. Would silence be supporting it? Neither is it lawful for any Christian

to put it out of his own power to speak in behalf of truth, when truth, or the Bible of God, comes to be spoken for or against.

Obj. 15. "But you are mostly aliens, and have no business with our governmental affairs." To this I

Answer. Admitting that we are all aliens, what does this prove? "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." Ps. xxiv. 1. We are moral subjects of the Lord of the whole earth. While we maintain true and faithful allegiance to him, and conscientiously obey his laws, we have a right to live in any part of his dominions, where, in his providence, he may please to cast our lots. We ought not to infringe upon any of the just rights of others, for this would be inconsistent with faithful allegiance to the Moral Governor. God "has given the earth to the sons of men;" and to the faithful in Christ Jesus a new covenant right to every thing they possess. Let us maintain this character, and leave the consequences to a kind and benevolent Father, who hath informed us that "they who truly seek him shall want no good thing."

We meddle not with your governmental affairs farther than their morality or immorality is concerned. We have a right to give our opinion. We do so, and the reason on which it is founded. We are often asked, why do we not incorporate with the national society? We wish to "be always ready to give every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is within us." We lament that we cannot join with you in your national capacity. The fault is not ours, but your own. Much as we love you, and much as we prefer your government, comparatively, yet we cannot

fully incorporate with you, lest we should sin against God, and be found unfaithful to him who is the King of nations. As witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ, we are also bound to testify against every immorality in the constitutions of the land in which we dwell. How is it possible that we could be faithful in this matter, were we not, in some measure, to "meddle with your governmental affairs?" Faithful testimony-bearing is one part of the character of the "two witnesses." It is our indispensable duty to imitate them. We are commanded to walk "by the footsteps of the flock." They grievously offended those against whom they testified. They are said "to torment the men that dwell upon the earth." If we be faithful, as they were, we will do so likewise. And though it should be told us, as the men of Sodom told Lot, Gen. xix. 9—"This one fellow came in to sojourn, and now he will needs be a judge,"—yet the approbation of God, and the answer of a good conscience, will more than compensate those temporary evils.

Such are some of the leading objections to the doctrines contained in the preceding part of this discourse. I come now to close with a few

USES. And,

1. Of Information.—From the text and doctrine we may learn that magistracy and ministry are two very important ordinances: the two "Sons of Oil," that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. They are among his near and intimate concerns. Both are of divine institution, and are intended to answer the most important purposes. Without these nothing but anarchy and confusion would prevail here, and gloomy horror cover the prospects of eternity. These very important ordi-

nances, in which the happiness of our kind is so much concerned, should be regulated by the divine law. This necessarily carries in it an obligation to all the moral subjects unto whom it is revealed to modify their conduct according to its requisitions. Those who refuse to accept this rule as the standard of their conduct, civil, as well as religious, rebel against the authority of the Moral Governor, and are in great danger of incurring his severe judgments. It is the duty of those who would wish to bear a true and faithful testimony for Jesus to be very cautious of doing any act which may implicate them in the criminality of rebelling against God. "Say ye not a confederacy," &c. Though God may spare long, yet he "will avenge himself of his adversaries." Though he is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and slow to anger, yet he will by no means clear the guilty. He will not suffer "his glory to be given to another, nor his praise to graven images."

2. Of Examination.—Let us inquire how we have attended to these very important concerns. Have we been endeavouring, amidst all our difficulties, to be found faithful? When worldly concerns, and the enjoyment of civil privileges and offices in the state, come in competition with the honour of Immanuel, have we abandoned them for the cause of our Head and Lord? Have we revolved in our minds the character which Christ gives of the real disciple? "If any man (says he) would be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." If, therefore, my brethren, ye would be followers of Jesus, self-denial is indispensably necessary. Did you calculate the cost when you embarked in his

cause? It may cost you much, but he will reimburse your expenses, for he sends none on a warfare at their own charges. In a word, have you been resolving, like Ruth, the Moabitess, with her mother-in-law, in following the testimony of Jesus—"Where thou goest, I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God?" &c.

Of Consolation.—Though the wheels of the reformation chariot move but slowly on,—though the vision wait, yet let not your expectation fall.

Though it tarry, wait for it. God's word is pledged that it shall come at the appointed time, and shall not tarry longer. The time draws near when the magistratical and the ministerial power shall be established upon a Scriptural basis. Is. xlix. 23. "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." And though we should not live to see those happy days, yet, provided that we are faithful witnesses, the time is coming, when, from the towering summit of Mount Zion above, we shall behold the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Though we may be pressed with many difficulties, and encompassed with the most embarrassing circumstances, while running our Christian race, and "pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,"—what are all these difficulties, compared with those joys unspeakable and full of glory which shall be revealed in us?

Though we should, in Divine Providence, be called to seal the testimony with our blood, Jesus has promised—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, neither shall the floods overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the

flames kindle upon thee." And when he has led us to the end of our journey, he will make us pillars in the temple of our God, to go no more out.

4. Of Rebuke.—This may be addressed to the three following descriptions:

First. To those who, like Gallio, care for none of these things. There is a wo pronounced upon those who are at ease in Zion. God will rank the neutralists among his enemies. "They who are not for us, are against us." They are involved in the same curse with those who are found in open hostility. Judges v. 23. "Curse ye Meroz, (saith the angel of the Lord,) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

Second. To those who are opposed to the reformation. Let such consider, they are fighting against God, and that they are in danger of being consumed by the fire of his indignation. "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle, (saith the Lord,) I would go through them, I would burn them together." Behold, the Lord is a man of war! Beware of rushing on the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler. Those who are found in the character of enemies have reason to fear lest the Lord should consume them with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming.

Third. To pretended friends. Wounds are considered as receiving additional poignancy, from the circumstance of being inflicted in the house of one's friend. From open enemies, nothing but hostility is expected. Had it been an enemy, said the Psalmist, I could have borne it. Let such as profess friendship to reformation, and, at the same

time, sap its foundation, remember that they will be considered equally inimical, (if not worse,) as those who, with axes and hammers, break down the carved work. Let such remember that affecting question, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

5. Of Exhortation.—From the whole, my brethren, be admonished to be careful and conscientious in keeping these ordinances pure and entire. To this I would exhort you all, by the example of the saints—"Go forth by the footsteps of the flock." Being encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sins that do most easily beset you.

By your covenant obligation. You have sworn allegiance to God. After solemn vows dare not to make inquiry.

By the obligation of the divine law. This binds all unto whom it comes. Your heathen neighbours in the forest will rise in judgment against you, and condemn you, should you neglect this unerring rule.

By the law of nature. This requires us to receive the divine law as the rule and standard of all our actions.

By your relationship to God. If he is our master, should we not fear him? If he is our father, should we not honour him?

By the incomparable price, a crown of immortality. "Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—A crown of salvation—a crown of eternal glory. Remember we are told, that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man conceived its excellence and glory. Amen.

An Essay

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POWERS THAT BE.

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SUBMISSION TO CIVIL AUTHORITY.

Does the law of God require of Christians a conscientious submission to all existing governments? Or are we at liberty, and required to make preliminary inquiries respecting the moral character of a government previously to our yielding such a submission to its commands? We do not now speak of active support, as by oaths of allegiance, or by taking part in the administration. Our inquiry relates to submission. Nor do we discuss the propriety of obeying laws that contravene God's law. On this point the Christian has explicit and unmistakeable direction. He is to "obey God rather than man." Nor do we treat of a forced conformity to civil regulations and enactments, in themselves not unlawful. This is certainly allowable. It is submission for "wrath's sake." Rom. xiii. 5. We are considering something different from any of these, viz., whether it is a Christian duty to acknowledge conscientiously, and as God's ordinance, *any* existing government, whatever its moral character. To this we will attempt to furnish an answer in the course of the examination of the following passage. It will be found in 1 Pet. ii. 13—16: "*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, a-*

supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God."

On this, we remark—

I. That the terms employed here denote civil authorities, whatever the titles of their magistrates, higher and subordinate. From the use, in this passage, and elsewhere in Scripture, of the title "king," to denote civil powers, we are not to infer, as some have done, that the Scriptures sanction, much less enjoin, monarchical government, as alone agreeable to God's ordinance of magistracy. And, first, if monarchs *alone* are meant here, *inferior* magistrates must be called governors, for so they are styled in the text. 2. The magistrates of ancient Israel were called in different periods by different names, and the government itself was far from having always the same form. For four hundred years after their settlement in the land of Canaan, they had no regular and unbroken succession of chief magistrates. Such as they had, and their administrations embraced the largest part of the four hundred years, they were styled שֹׁפְטִים, or judges. The highest authorities in the various tribes were even less distinctly designated. 3. So far from enjoining monarchical, the Scriptures favour a republican or representative form of government. The example of Israel, just referred to, is exactly in point. Among that people, many of their ordinary magistrates were evidently elective. "Choose ye out from among you," says Moses to the twelve tribes;

and this was certainly the principle of the political arrangements of Moses; a principle but little interfered with upon the introduction of the monarchical form at a subsequent period. Hence, though God had designated the person in whose hands the royal power was to be lodged,—the voice of the people was not disregarded. Witness the election of Saul, and of David, and the supplications presented by the people to Rehoboam when the people came to "Shechem to make him king." (1 Kings xii. 1.) The truth is, 4. That the name of the chief magistrate, and even the particular form, as it relates to distribution of powers, and the whole subject of checks and balances, is a matter, in itself, of indifference. The grand requisite, as we shall show presently, is, that in all these matters there be a constant regard in every element and principle to bring them into accordance with the moral law of God. This appears in the passage, for

II. Civil government is here described as an "ordinance of man:" "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man." The term "ordinance" is not used here in the same sense which we now frequently put upon it. In common parlance a civil "ordinance" is a municipal regulation,—a law ordained by a town council, or some peculiar enactment of the supreme authority. Here, it signifies the system of government set up and in operation. Hence, it follows, "to the king as supreme," &c. But how is government an "ordinance of man?" Does it mean that civil government is a mere human device, that it has no higher origin than the voice of the nation? That it is a mere voluntary association which men may form or not, or that when formed it may be mo-

delled as men please, irrespective of the claims of the Most High? Certainly not: "the powers that be are ordained of God,"—Rom. xiii. 1,—a fact which we may gather from the very constitution of man as a social being,—made for society, for co-operation with his fellows. Civil government has a higher origin than mere human ingenuity: God is its author. He has defined its ends, its duties, and the principles of its administration. He has even determined the class of men who should alone be the depositaries of civil authority: "able men, men that fear God, men of truth, and hating covetousness." How, then, is civil government an "ordinance of man?"

1. It is so called from the fact that human instrumentality is concerned in making its arrangements. Observe, not merely in giving it being, but in establishing the specific and peculiar terms of its constitution. This will appear more clearly in a literal rendering of the original words—πασῃ ἀνθρωπινῃ κτισει—every human creation.* As we have already intimated, civil government is an ordinance of God, but not in such a sense as to preclude the exercise of human wisdom in what relates to its form, its various departments, its checks and balances. And hence, forms of government, in some respects very different, have existed with divine approbation. During the period of the Judges, Israel was a confederated republic. It was afterwards a limited, and, with certain reservations, an hereditary monarchy. In both these periods, however, the nation was in avowed subjection to the Most High, and its affairs were

* M'Knight translates it "every human creation of magistrates." This supply is undoubtedly correct, as government is the subject spoken of.

managed with divine approbation—in the spirit of the love of God, and with avowed subjection to its authority; the rights and liberties of *all* the people and the interest of religion being properly guarded and maintained. In this respect, there is a wide difference between civil and ecclesiastical government. The latter is, in every particular, completely arranged by Jesus Christ: the Bible contains the church's constitution. Every thing relating to the officers of the church, their duties, and their powers, is fully set forth in the Scriptures. To these, nothing can be added; from them nothing taken. Our business—and our only business—is to ascertain and carry out the divine will. Hence, ecclesiastical government is never denominated, as that of the state is, an "ordinance of man." But this is not all.

2. Government is a human creation, inasmuch as the constituted civil authorities are left to the exercise of a wise discretion in the enactment and rescinding of laws, as demanded by emergent circumstances. For example, in regulating commerce, the currency, taxation, and, to some extent, even what relates to education and police, states are left free to choose that plan which the times and the existing state of things render advisable. True, all civil enactments are to be brought to scriptural tests—none of these must run counter to the moral law—and in some departments, as in relation to marriage, to the penalties of gross crimes, to the vindication of the Sabbath, to the support of religion—the state is directly bound by the precepts and directions of the revealed will of God. Still, there remains a wide margin. In this, again, differing from the church—*all* whose laws, as well as constitutional privileges, are em-

bodied in the Scriptures, our sole business being to discover and apply them.

Hence, in perfect consistency with the principle that civil government is an "ordinance of God," it is here styled "an ordinance of man;" and we add, that in this title we find no indistinct intimation that lawful civil authority is not—cannot be—founded in the sword, nor in any absolute scheme of hereditary descent, nor in any thing else which stifles the popular will.

III. This passage describes, and requires submission to, a *righteous* civil government. And,

1. The magistrates here spoken of are "sent" of God: "as unto them that are sent by him."* But what means this term? Are we to apply it to any existing government? Are we to suppose that, irrespective of the origin of their power, or its nature, or the spirit in which it is exercised, all civil rulers that happen to occupy the seat of power are to be honoured with conscientious allegiance? Certainly not. For—(1.) There have been civil rulers, of whom God declared, in the most express terms, that He had *not* sent them. We refer to the kings of the ten tribes after they became an independent kingdom: "They have set up kings, but *not by me;* they have made princes, and I knew it not." Hos. viii. 4. Can language be more explicit? "Not by me;" "*they* have made princes." Yet this was an existing government; and, still more—and to this we ask particular attention—it was a popular government, having had its origin in a great national revolution, exercised and upheld by the voice of the people. The

* We take for granted, that the person sending is here not the "king," but the "Lord." Rom. xiii., a parallel passage, confirms this.

kings of Israel, in other words, were no usurpers; they swayed no sceptre gained by conquest and blood. Yet even of these God said they were set up "*not* by Him," He "knew it not." The assent of the people they had, but God did not acknowledge nor recognise them. Surely, it would have been no "damnable" sin for a fearer of God to withhold from such kings conscientious submission; to such no allegiance could be due "for the Lord's sake." (2.) We have declarations equally explicit in relation to the existing idolatrous, tyrannical authorities of the old world. We refer to the language of prophecy, which denominates them as "beastly" in their origin and character, and blasphemous in their pretensions, and denounces them as doomed of God. "I saw," says Daniel, (chap. vii.,) "and, behold, the four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea, and four great beasts came up from the sea." The last of these—the fourth beast—was "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet." And so John: (Rev. xiii. 7,) "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, haivng seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." All intelligent Protestants apply these symbolic representations to the divided Roman empire—the existing anti-Christian thrones of Europe. Did God send them? No. For even still more expressly as to their origin, John says—"And the dragon"—the devil—"gave him his power, and seat, and great authority." Can any thing be clearer? How could this beast—these kings—claim conscientious submission? The

devil—not God—gave them their power: a fact written as clear as the sun in the heavens upon their constitution and administration. The former, adverse to the rights of the people—the latter, directed not to the advancement of God's glory, and the interests of morality and religion, but in diametrical opposition to all these. God sends them! Yes. As he sends tempests and plagues, to scourge the nations for their sins. As he raised up Pharaoh, to show in these last times his power in their utter and signal ruin.* (3.) It cannot be that God, in any such way, sends immoral powers, for then the only inquiry would be, Does a government exist? Has it the requisite vigour and resources to compel obedience to its decrees? Behind this, we could not—dare not go. Every usurper, every tyrant, every Nero, Caligula, Heliogabalus, or Borgia, might justly demand conscientious allegiance as God's minister! Do the advocates of existing powers, as God's ordinance, admit this? No. They fall back from their own argument—

* We append Dr. Junkin's exposition of this passage "The dragon invested him with authority. . . The Scripture account of absolute despotism, is, that Satan gave it, and the blasphemous slander of God is the argument by which the doctrine of legitimacy is sustained from the Bible. . . 'All power is of God; the powers that be are ordained of God,' therefore iron-handed despotism is a divine institution. This is the conclusion of its friends, but the word of truth proclaims it to be from below. The same kind of logic will prove the devil's own usurpations to be right and proper. . . The fallacy here lies in a false assumption. Paul says, 'The powers that be,' ἐξουσιαι, that is, the civil government, is an ordinance of God; but the assumption is, that he means arbitrary power, might without right. This is the logic by which Diabolus has blasphemed the Creator for a score of centuries."

they insist upon some attributes as essential to a right to reign. We live in the age of revolutions. The world will not hear even the enunciation of the doctrine of passive obedience. The nations have risen, and are still rising, to demand, at least some, credentials of these pretended vicegerents of the Almighty. But, are they not powers?—are they not "powers that be?" How, then, except on *our* principle, can we go behind this fact, and investigate the validity of their commission? We affirm, on no other.

Who, then, are "sent" of God? We answer, those who come bearing the law, and exhibiting, in measure, the image of God. Those who, honouring God, and seeking to accomplish the ends of *his* moral ordinance of magistracy, do really sustain the character, as they perform the duties of his ministers. To no others are we called upon, in God's name, and for his sake, to yield a conscientious submission.

2. The passage expressly defines them as righteous—v. 14—"As unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." That this language defines a righteous administration of justice between man and man as an indispensable feature of civil government, without which it would have no validity—no claims upon our allegiance, is scarcely disputable. Few will be even disposed to deny this, at least in this land. For, whatever the abettors of a "divine right to rule wrong" may affirm, it is here universally acknowledged, (we go farther, maintained,) that tyrants have no claim upon the conscientious submission of their subjects: that, instead, it is even a duty to throw off the yoke the very first oppor-

tunity. The contrary doctrine would involve the notion—reproachful to the Almighty—that He not merely recognises the proud and hard-hearted despot as His vicegerent, but obliges the wretched victims of his power to look up to him with reverence as God's minister to him for good.

But, is this all? Is it enough to characterize a government as "sent" of God "for the punishment of the evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well," that common justice be dispensed, the lawless and the turbulent restrained, and the rights of the peaceable guarded? Certainly not. Are none, in the sight of God's law—we speak of it as revealed as the law of society—are none "evil-doers" but rioters and robbers, disturbers of the public peace, and invaders of private rights? And are we to limit the phrase, "such as do well," to those who pay due regard to the common welfare, and to the rights of their fellow-citizens? By no means. Wrong-doing and well-doing are both to be measured by the divine law—not merely its second, but its first table. He does wrong who dishonours God, and blasphemes his name, and profanes his Sabbath,—he does well, in a high sense, who does the opposite of all these. We might rest our argument on this point with a fair interpretation of the phrases themselves—evil and well-doing—but we have additional evidence. God so explained it in the code which he prepared for ancient Israel. The book of Revelation exhibits the same principle in its denunciation of civil government—not as tyrannical merely, but as impious; and, finally, we may appeal to the common opinion of all nations—pagan and Christian, ancient and modern. For where is the nation which has taken no account—we except revolutionary

France for a very short time—of such crimes as open blasphemy?

If this be granted, our principle is established. The government that claims the conscientious submission of the faithful, must be, in the sense in which we have now explained it, as well as in the former, a restraint upon evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. And why not? We admit, as we have already said, that a government that tramples upon human rights is not to be acknowledged as the minister of God. How, then, we ask, can a government be so acknowledged which puts no restraint upon the open enemies of the Most High, pays no regard to the prerogatives of Christ, and throws open its honours, and thus gives "power" to the avowed despisers of his law? Is this to answer the ends of a divine ordinance? Surely the rights of God and of Christ, are not less worthy of recognition than human rights. To permit, and especially to patronize, their violation, is no less a crime than to refuse to the citizens of the commonwealth protection of life or property.*

Now observe, all agree,—with the few exceptions already referred to,—that there are limits to the duty of submission, that at least the rights of man must not be seriously infringed. Some would, however, stop at this point. They would be satisfied with the very narrowest sense that the terms will possibly bear. We make no such re-

* It is implied in the above, and follows as a consequence from it, that a government which itself refuses to own God and Christ, must be invalid. For if the mere refusal to vindicate the honour of Jehovah, invalidates, much more, the practical denial of his supreme dominion.

strictions. We interpret them in the light of Scripture, and of the entire history of our race, so far as it contains examples worthy of being followed. Without hesitation, we repeat our assertion that the passage enjoins conscientious submission to such a government, and to such a one only, as vindicates not merely human rights, but the rights of God,—of Him who is "King of kings and Lord of lords."*

3. The fact that civil government is a divine ordinance demands this interpretation. As we have already said, provision has been made in the very constitution of human nature for the existence of civil institutions among men. And the language of Rom. xiii. 1, is express to the point that civil government is, not a mere contrivance of men, a matter of expedience or necessity,—but an ordinance of God. "The powers that be are ordained of God." "He," the ruler, "is the minister of God to thee for good." But what does this ordinance comprehend? Does it embrace no more than the affixing of a divine sanction to the exercise of such authority among men as is denominated civil?—leaving every thing relating to its ends, its limits, its exercise, completely independent of God's will and direction? Certainly not. A divine ordinance is something. God's minister has something to do in that character.

* It is a singular fact that many expositors in explaining Rom. xiii. 1—7, introduce, and make essential to the being of a lawful government, what is not in that passage, viz.: that it originates with the people, or has their assent, while they leave out, both in that passage and in the one before us, or at all events, lay little stress upon what is the turning point of both,—the description of the power!

And whatever government is, it must be moral—for God is holy and good. Whatever his servant has to do, he must, in doing it, bear the image of God for whom he acts. It is monstrous even to imagine that the Most High has impressed his sanction upon every kind of human authority, however immoral, profane, blasphemous, requiring of the unhappy and *tempted* subject of such dominion, not merely a peaceful subjection to irresistible power, but a conscientious reverence of its officers and agents, as his ministers. We are not left to adopt any such revolting conclusion. The scriptures are plain. They define, as we have already remarked, the ends of civil authority,—the good of society, and God's glory; they fix the character of its officers—able men. Ex. xviii. 21; just men, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God," 2 Kings xxiii. 3. They prescribe many of its laws, and enjoin upon it special duties. Now, we repeat, every ordinance of God, in its institution, is like himself, and only as it bears his image in its constitution and administration, can it possibly be required of us to yield it that high regard, and hearty acquiescence, and conscientious obedience, which is due to those to whom so high and important trusts are committed.

But, it will be said, the government then existing, which claimed the submission of Christians,—the Roman,—certainly did not possess the character of a righteous government, as we have defined it,—did not acknowledge Christ—nor regard his law. The fact is admitted, the conclusion is denied. Because, (1.) This government was one of conquest, so far as related to the provinces in which the Christians resided, whom

Peter addresses, and even in Rome itself, was a military and not a popular government, and, hence, on the principles of objectors themselves, could not claim a conscientious allegiance: in other words, it was a government which might lawfully have been thrown off, even by a violent revolution. The advocates of passive obedience, and non-resistance, are consistent—no others are, in adducing this objection. It strikes at the fundamental, and, in this country, generally admitted doctrine, that a mere government of force cannot claim to be God's ordinance,—cannot demand conscientious allegiance, but may be resisted, overturned, and another substituted in its stead. (2.) Intelligent Christians knew, as they know now, that this government had been denounced by the Spirit of God as the enemy of the kingdom of Christ. They understood the prophecies of Daniel, to which we have already referred, and could have had no difficulty in applying them to a government with whose history they were familiar, as one of destruction,—of trampling down and breaking in pieces. Nor, (3.) does our view involve the conclusion that these directions were of no use to the churches. This passage was designed, and would have this effect, to arrest any tendency on the part of Christians to reject entirely the ordinance of civil government; to meet the case of a class of persons which began to make their appearance at that early age, as we learn from Peter's Second Epistle to these churches, as they have often since, who rejected the ordinance of civil government altogether,—true anti-government men,—holding it to be inconsistent with Christianity, under any circumstances, to have to do with civil power. Moreover, the Scriptures were intended to be a

complete rule in every age, and such passages as the one before us, would point out to the faithful one grand object at which they should aim—the reformation of national organizations until they should be brought into conformity with the characteristics embodied summarily, but distinctly, in these passages themselves. These admonitions, then, were far from being useless or inapplicable, at the time, and are of immense use now. Indeed, the very fact that such directions were needed at that time, is no inconsiderable argument in favour of our view. For how could the idea have originated that Christians were adverse to civil authority, unless from the perversion of the apostolic teachings in regard to the unholy nature and unchristian character of existing institutions?

Our interpretation must stand. The passage teaches the duty of acknowledging a righteous civil government, and no other. It makes this an essential characteristic. And that, as much when the government is of popular origin, as under any other circumstances. Even of such a government, if it had this attribute, God says, as he said of the popular government of the ten tribes, "They have set up kings, but not by me; they have made princes, and I knew it not."

4. To a righteous government hearty allegiance is imperatively required. "Submit yourselves therefore." There are two kinds of submission to civil authority. One is forced—for "wrath's sake:" the other is that to which we have so often alluded, a sincere, cheerful subjection—for "conscience sake," for "the Lord's sake." As to the former, circumstances may render it expedient, and even dutiful. It may be expedient, from regard to a man's personal safety,—like the submis-

sion of the peaceable inhabitant to the unjust exactions of an invading host, pouring into his country with irresistible might; or, more nearly, like the peaceable subjection of the slave to the unjust and sinful claims of his pretended owner. A subjection based upon no higher principle than the impossibility of successful resistance, and the fear of making things worse by attempting the use of violent means of relief. On these grounds, submission for wrath's sake may be expedient, and even in a sense, dutiful. Still more, the Christian regards the peace of society—he knows that the reformation of the government is a work of time and of Christian effort—he has, as a willing subject of Christ's government, a high regard for the welfare of the body politic, and is thankful for every law, and every act of administration that accords with the divine will, and thus tends to promote the object of the ordinance of magistracy—and, besides, is careful that no just reproach shall fall, through any act of his, upon the pure and peaceful character of the gospel of Christ, and cherishes, with habitual concern, the honour of his exalted Prince and Saviour. On these grounds, the intelligent Christian demeans himself quietly and honestly in all godliness, so long as his privileges and those of his fellow-Christians, and the community, are not interfered with, whatever the moral character of the government. And thus, as a matter of duty, and we may even say for "conscience sake," not as regarding the existing authorities as God's ministers, but as for other and higher reasons.*

* In fact, those who adopt the views which we advocate will be found the most peaceful members of society, better deserving of its protection than a large proportion of those who acknowledge, merely as existing, the powers that be.

God's ordinance, however, requires more than this. It demands, as we have all along suggested, a hearty and cheerful recognition of its being and its authority, and a ready submission to its enactments, as bearing the stamp and impress of God's institution. Such a government, and such officers, the Christian will honour, support, maintain and defend. This is the submission enjoined in the passage before us: "Submit, for the Lord's sake," "for so is the will of God." Such a submission as the godly Israelites gave to the Mosaic institutions, and the officers by whom they were administered—to the authority of David, and his godly successors. Such a submission as the saints will yield to the governments of the earth at that time when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

Here we might enter upon a more minute examination of the elements which enter into the constitution of a righteous civil government. For these, however, we refer the reader, as well as for the application of the principles which we have vindicated, to the pages of the "Sons of Oil:" adding, only, that no government can claim to be in accordance with God's moral ordinance, which does not, in Christian lands, honour God in Christ, adopt his law as supreme, regard the rights and privileges of the entire community, particularly of the most needy, which does not deny its bounties to the open enemies of Christ, and direct its operations to the advancement of moral order and the glory of God, in the maintenance of God's law, the support of religion and the restraint of those who do evil against both tables of the decalogue. These are not "high and ultimate attainments." They are primary and fundamental principles.

We do not demand absolute perfection; but we do demand of any government that asks our conscientious support, that it "kiss the Son," that it put itself under that law which only needs to be understood and applied to reach every interest of social life, and every element of moral order, that it trample upon none of its subjects or citizens, that it regard with interest the special kingdom of Christ, bought with his blood, and cherished as his peculiar possession. In this way, and in this way alone, can we vindicate with effect God's ordinance of magistracy, and perpetuate its claims to future generations, and so secure for them the rich heritage of Christian institutions, and the favour of the Most High. Adopting these views, we must withhold, for reasons which are so well stated in the preceding pamphlet, our conscientious allegiance from the government of our land, endeavouring, in the mean time, while we labour for a reformation, to demean ourselves as becomes the subjects, disciples, and witnesses of Jesus Christ —the King of kings, and the Lord of lords—the Saviour of his body the church.

THE END.

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